



ALBUQUERQUE JUSTICE FOR YOUTH COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE



2021

Year One Documentation Team Report



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Albuquerque Justice for Youth Community Collaborative



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BACKGROUND

This report reflects the first cycle of a long distance journey to achieve justice for youth. There is expectation that there will be many more cycles to come. La Plazita Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico initiated the Albuquerque Justice for Youth Community Collaborative in 2020 and holds the responsibility to move the work forward over the first two years. As an organization, La Plazita Institute's philosophy and approach is *La Cultural Cura*, or Culture Cures, centering culture and healing. Albino Garcia, executive director and founder of La Plazita Institute, built the overall framework for the Collaborative, using a cultural context. The *Quinto Sol*, or Five Suns, model is rooted in *Mexica* creation stories. The *Quinto Sol* philosophy has been strategically positioned throughout time as a way to establish and organize travel through multiple worlds. Garcia developed the *Quinto Sol* curriculum through the lens of his life experiences. Over many years, he has applied it to his cultural healing work with at-risk and incarcerated youth, has shared it with global audiences and continues to see his life and work reflected in the multiple cycles. The model adapts to change and responds to a world that is always shifting, which allows for application in multiple contexts. The journey over the first year took us through five worlds to understand how each Sun relates to the Collaborative and can be applied to our collective work toward healing and justice.

“Exposure to different cultures can and does make an impact. A cultural outlet to express themselves can be helpful and cathartic for many who lack something like that in their life.”

-Isaiah Trujillo, Youth Representative, Southwest Conservation Corp

Quinto Sol Framework

The spark that lit the fire to form this collaborative began with the intention of healing ourselves and future generations, some would say it began with our ancestors who had that intention for us. The Collaborative followed the rhythms of relationship with self, other, community, land, and celestial. The core of this initiative is built on our recognition that “I” does not exist without “we”, a way of being that is diametrically opposed to the current juvenile justice system functioning based in individualistic, capitalistic, white imperialism. The model is founded in Aztec concepts of time, energy and movement that are ways of building knowledge, relationships, and systems with deep roots in the Americas where we do our work. The model is slightly out of place with roots in Central Mexico, but the symbology is further anchored in modern-day urban Chicana/o philosophies and are embedded in languages, traditions and visual cultures that live in Albuquerque's original neighborhoods. Pre Colonial trade routes, migrations, movements, and present-day cyberspace have connected us on this continent over time. The Collaborative is guided by this model, with an invitation to all members to find connections to their own symbols and meaning systems and find practical, radical ways to define what justice for youth looks and feels like outside of colonial-imposed models of justice.



Briefly, this model moves through five stages of growth. In the first stage, Tecpatl (flint knife), we cut to the core of the inner world. The Collaborative sought to find their core, including our identities and how that relates to who we are as a people. In the second phase, Acatl (reed), the Collaborative moved into family relationships, understanding how we care, protect and feed each other. We make space for co-learning and extending our sense of family. The third stage, Tochtli (rabbit, animal kingdom), entails movement into the community and we explore how we identify and relate to each other. In this stage, we begin to develop a collective narrative of youth justice and start to see the different roles we can play, identify strengths we bring as a collective, and look at distinct hurts that motivate us to collaborate. The fourth stage, Calli (house), brings us to think about institutions and global society, in addition to houses of justice. This stage calls forth our work to identify where narrative power lies and how to shift the center towards community. Finally, the fifth stage, Nahui Ollin (movement from four directions), defines us and allows us to see how far we have come. We have the opportunity to move between all stages and tie them together. We are reminded that the real work happens in the movement. We can reflect on what changed, solutions developed, and also prepare for renewing the cycle. We follow this cycle in the narrative report provided below.

About the Albuquerque Justice for Youth Community Collaborative

The Albuquerque Justice for Youth Community Collaborative is a network-building, solutions-based collaboration movement for youth justice policy and systems reform initiated in 2020 with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Collaborative is made up of community-based stakeholders—local grassroots organizations, youth justice advocates, and young people and families who have been directly impacted by the juvenile justice system. “The Collaborative’s work is both healing and creative—holding public systems accountable for harm they inflict on communities, holding each other accountable for our complicity in that harm, and continuing to develop culturally-grounded and community-based supports and opportunities, especially for young people of color. We come together to build a collective



partnership and work toward a new, community-defined vision of youth justice for generations to come.” La Plazita Institute was granted \$540,000 to:

- 1) bring together community stakeholders to strengthen their power-base and influence in order to reinvest and expand the juvenile justice narrative from a community perspective
- 2) reduce competition for resources by giving community stakeholders an incentive to participate in the design and reclamation of the juvenile justice narrative
- 3) initiate a shift away from systems ownership towards community ownership in the Juvenile Justice narrative



Photo by Jaelyn deMaria

The Collaborative’s main goals are to:

1. ***Build authentic community and transparency.*** The Collaborative will provide a space for community members who are most impacted by the juvenile justice system and who work with those most impacted by the system. It is a forum to work through tensions that may exist between community stakeholders and a place to build partnerships. The Collaborative will invite members to come together and share their needs, perspectives and solutions with one another. In this space, members need not censor what they say out of fear of retaliation and/or retribution.
2. ***Increase capacity, authentic belonging and ownership.*** The Collaborative will increase the capacity of community members to navigate the policies and practices and understand the language of the juvenile justice system. This increased capacity is key to building a true sense of belonging and ownership in the reform planning and design arena. It is about reclaiming voice, power and strength.



3. ***Amplify community voice.*** In year two of its work, the Collaborative will lift community voice by strategically positioning its representatives across all committees of the local and state juvenile justice infrastructure, both as leaders and members. The Collaborative will help define the problems and craft the solutions.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

The Collaborative is composed of twenty four community-based organizations. The names of each organization, their organizational representative, and their system-impacted community mentor is provided below.

Albuquerque Center for Hope & Recovery

Impacted Community Mentor: Mikayla Trujillo

Organization Rep: Evan Voth, Associate Director

www.achrm.org (Year Founded: 2001)



The Albuquerque Center for Hope and Recovery (ACHR) works to support people in Albuquerque (and across the state, virtually) who live with mental health or co-occurring mental health and substance abuse challenges. Through peer support, in a safe environment, we aim to help people experience positive life growth by focusing on hope, humor and personal responsibility. We serve approximately 250 people per year, about a quarter of whom are 28 years or younger.

Ancestral Lands/Southwest Conservation Corps

Impacted Community Mentor: Isaiah Trujillo

Organization Rep: Chas Robles, Corps Director

www.ancestrallands.org (Year Founded: 2008)



Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps (ALCC) was created to remove barriers to participation for underserved youth by bringing the corps experience to our native communities and young people. ALCC currently offers a wide range of service programs for indigenous youth and young adults in Albuquerque, Acoma Pueblo, Zuni Pueblo, and Gallup, including environmental conservation and protection; High School Equivalency Degree (HSED) and college credit and certification programs; Hiking and Explorer Clubs to reconnect elementary aged youth to the land; and partnering with rural communities to provide economic development, conservation, and education opportunities. We serve over 200 Indigenous young people annually through paid conservation service programs, internships, and unpaid youth programming. Our vision is to lead our Nations back to ecological and cultural well-being.



Future Focused Education

Impacted Community Mentor: Trey Porter and Damien Avila

Organization Rep: Tony Monfiletto, Executive Director

and Moneka Stevens, Director of Community Engagement

www.futurefocusededucation.org (Year Founded:



By remodeling education from the community up, we can re-engage students and prepare them for life in the 21st century – because the future health and prosperity of our society demand something different. Future Focused Education focuses on serving the students who have not been successful in traditional school settings. We know that these teenagers are more likely to make choices that can foreclose on their future. As obstacles to academic success increase, students turn to low-wage, low-skill jobs to help support themselves and their families rather than participating in activities that could open the door to a more prosperous future. For these students, the tradeoff between meeting short-term family obligations and long-term career preparation often comes down to an economic imperative where today’s needs overshadow tomorrow’s opportunities. Future Focused Education is working to eliminate this tradeoff by transforming education and schools so they are responsive to the realities faced by many students and can connect students to college and career.

Keshet Dance and Center for the Arts

Impacted Community Mentor: Emani Brooks

Organization Rep: Shira Greenberg, Founder/Artistic Director

www.keshetarts.org (Year Founded: 1996)



Rooted in dance, mentorship and a welcoming space for the arts, Keshet activates community and fosters unlimited possibilities through education, engagement, innovation and the pursuit of justice. We are located in Albuquerque; however, our work focuses on supporting communities throughout the state of New Mexico, and offering programming throughout the U.S. and abroad. Keshet serves people ages 2 - 102. The heart of the organization is Keshet Dance Company, which feeds and is fed by three intersecting program areas: education and engagement; the ideas and innovation community; and arts and justice initiatives, which includes juvenile justice direct service, research/evaluation, policy/advocacy work, and community connectivity. Keshet serves between 5,000-10,000 individuals annually across our various program arms.



La Plazita Institute

Youth/Family Mentor: Xiuhtecuhtli Soto, Destiny Sisneros and Eva Cisneros

Collaborative Chair: Albino Garcia, Founder/Executive Director

Design Team Members: Norma Gamble, Sonia Ornelas, Sylvia Garcia, Pablo Soto, Russell Urban, Erik Rivera, Joe Garcia, Lisa Samudio, Annie Salsich

www.laplazitainstitute.org (Year Founded: 2004)



At La Plazita Institute, Inc. (LPI), we use a comprehensive, holistic and cultural approach designed around the philosophy of “La Cultura Cura.” We engage youth, elders and communities to draw from their own roots and histories that express core traditional values of respect, honor, love, and family. Our initiatives focus on: cultural restorative justice; agriculture, conservation, community revitalization, economic self-sustainability; community learning, non-traditional leadership, social enterprise; traditional and spiritual healing; racial equity, health and family wellness; and community engagement and collective impact. LPI’s program model is founded on the core idea that we are who we serve.

NACA Inspired Schools Network/My Brother’s Keeper

Impacted Community Mentor: Kaylin Francisco and Crystal Coriz

Organization Rep: Mañpiya Black Elk,

Director of Boys and Young Men of Color (BYMOC) Programming

www.nacainspiredschoolsnetwork.org



The NACA Inspired Schools Network (NISN) supports leaders in Indigenous communities to develop a network of schools providing rigorous academic curriculum aimed at college preparation while also promoting Indigenous culture, identity and community investment. NISN is building a movement of students, families and educators to establish schools in New Mexico and throughout the country that will create strong leaders who are academically prepared, secure in their identities and ultimately transforming their communities. In 2018, NISN was awarded the prestigious Obama Foundation’s My Brother’s Keeper Alliance Impact Award. NISN is currently serving 497 students and is located on the original homelands of the Tiwa and Keres People.

New Day Youth and Family Services

Impacted Community Mentor: Roberto Aragon

Organization Rep: Brooke Tafoya, Executive Director,

and Gabriella Chapman

www.ndnm.org (Year Founded: 1976)



New Day Youth and Family Services (“New Day”) has been serving the Albuquerque community for nearly 45 years. Our mission is to authentically connect young people to safety, community and



themselves. Our programs support youth, ages 13-24, who are in need of housing, basic needs support, connection to positive adults and community, access to resources and skills development. To accomplish our mission, New Day works toward a vision that every youth has safe refuge for the present, adult allies for the future and the basic skills needed to carve a healthy and positive path forward. Annually, we serve approximately 1,000 youth.

New Mexico Asian Family Center

Impacted Community Member: John Hoang

Organization Rep: Sachi Watase, Executive Director

and Ana Bhandari, Youth Coordinator

www.nmafc.org/home/ (Year Founded: 2006)



The New Mexico Asian Family Center provides culturally sensitive programs and services creating a Pan-Asian community that advocates for and supports itself. Through our direct services, we offer individual and family counseling, legal consultation and representation, general navigation services, in- language peer support groups, yoga and body work for survivors, and warm referrals to trusted agencies. We provide these direct services free of charge to over 300 unduplicated clients annually and programming and outreach to more than 5,000 individuals through civic engagement, financial workshops, multi-generational family programming, youth development, and interpretation and translation trainings. Our offerings are tailored to those who identify as Asian, Pacific Islander, Desi, and Native Hawaiian, with a particular focus on immigrants/refugees, undocumented individuals, survivors and those with low or extremely low incomes and limited English proficiency.

New Mexico Black Leadership Council

Impacted Community Mentor: B. MonTeil Williams

Organization Rep: Cathryn McGill, Founder/Director

and Zahra Bundrage, Collective Impact Strategist



www.nmblc.org (Year Founded: 2019, NM Black History Organizing Committee formerly in 2010)

The New Mexico Black Leadership Council (NMBLC) serves as a nongovernmental hub organization to create a viable and sustainable social profit sector designed to serve the Black communities in the state of New Mexico. We focus on building capacity in five areas of impact: (Health (Physical, Financial, Behavioral), Cultural Vibrancy, Civic Engagement, Leadership and Workforce Development and Positive Youth Development).



New Mexico Dream Team

Impacted Community Mentor: Isaac Ramirez

Organization Rep: Eduardo Esquivel González

www.nmdreamteam.org (Year Founded: 2014)



The New Mexico Dream Team is a statewide network committed to create power for multigenerational, undocumented, LGBTQ+ and mixed status families towards liberation. Through trainings and leadership development, we engage our community and allies in becoming leaders using an intersectional, gender, and racial justice lens—to develop and implement an organizing and advocacy infrastructure for policy change fighting to dismantle systemic oppression. The New Mexico Dream Team works with undocumented and mixed status immigrant youth, LGBTQ+ youth and allies, ages 9-24 in Bernalillo, Santa Fe and Doña Ana Counties. We serve approximately 300-400 youth annually.

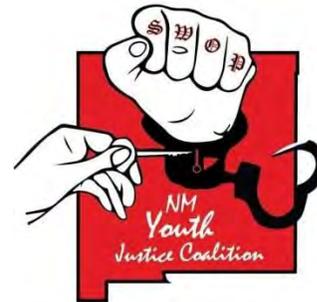
New Mexico Youth Justice Coalition

Impacted Community Mentor: Quincy Walker

Organization Rep: Amanda Gallegos,

Field Organizer through Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP)

www.swop.net/youth-justice



The New Mexico Youth Justice Coalition (NMYJC) is a coalition of young people, families, allies, and community members whose lives have been directly impacted by punitive criminal justice and juvenile justice systems, working to build safe communities that don't rely on prisons to address community needs. Our goal is to close all youth prisons in New Mexico and decrease the overall number of youths locked in facilities throughout the state. We are also focused on reinvesting in effective, outcome-driven, community-based alternatives to locked facilities and other punitive programs. NMYJC believes in building leadership with directly impacted young people and families, with the knowledge that the people closest to the problems are closest to the solutions. We are dedicated to empowering young people to work alongside their peers, their communities, and decision makers to build a New Mexico where we don't put kids in cages, but we do invest in their futures.

NMCAN

Impacted Community Mentor: Shoshawna Jim

Organization Rep: Kira Luna, Director of Leadership Enrichment

www.nmcan.org (Year Founded: 1990)



NMCAN partners with young people to build community, promote equity, and lead change. Since 1990, we have leveraged community partnerships and volunteerism to improve children and youth's experiences in foster care. Today, we have grown to



authentically engage young people impacted by the foster care system, the juvenile justice system and/or homelessness to improve their transition to adulthood. Together, we work to: reduce systemic barriers that negatively impact their lives; help them learn how to build positive community networks and strengthen their sense of belonging; and access tools to achieve goals related to education, employment, health, housing and personal finance. We are steadfastly dedicated to young people as partners. On an annual basis, NMCAN partners with approximately 125 young people ages 14-25 in Bernalillo, Sandoval and Valencia Counties.

Pegasus Legal Services for Children

Impacted Youth/Family Mentor: Abigail Long

Organization Rep: Bette Fleishman, Executive Director

and Mariel Willow, Attorney

www.pegasuslaw.org (Year Founded: 2003)



At Pegasus Legal Services for Children, we promote and defend the rights of children and youth to safe and stable homes, quality education and healthcare, and a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. We provide legal representation in civil matters, including runaway youth, young parents, youth living with kin relations, incarcerated youth and children taken into the child welfare system under the NM Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD). Our office is located in Albuquerque; however, we offer legal services statewide. We provide services that directly affect approximately 1,000 youth a year, as young as 1 day old up through age 25. Additionally, we work on policy issues that affect a much larger group of young people.

Recycled Man, LLC

Impacted Community Mentor: Erick Pacheco, LMHC, LADAC

Organization Rep: Erick Pacheco, Owner

www.rioawakening.com (Year Founded: 2009)



The mission of Re-Cycled Man, LLC is to provide culturally Competent care to individuals who live with substance abuse and mental health issues. Our goal is to enrich the lives of individuals in our community through education and therapeutic treatment. Re-Cycled man was founded on the belief that recovery from substance abuse and mental health issues is possible. We believe that recovery begins by establishing a healthy relationship with self, others, and society. These relationships are essential to feeling a part of, rather than apart from.



Serenity Mesa

Impacted Community Mentor:

*Organization Rep: Jennifer Weiss-Burke, Executive Director
and Cate Collins, Clinical Director*

www.healingaddictionnm.org (Year Founded: 2010)



Serenity Mesa provides substance abuse treatment and transitional living services for youth ages 14 to 21 who are struggling with an addiction to drugs and/or alcohol and may have a co-occurring disorder. Serenity Mesa is a non-profit operating under the umbrella of Healing Addiction in Our Community (HAC). HAC was formed in 2010 by a group of concerned parents and grandparents who wanted to raise awareness and provide education about the opiate epidemic affecting the state of NM and its youth. Serenity Mesa was opened in 2015 and has since served over 250 young people. We provide a safe space for young people to find sobriety and learn life skills on how to live a life free from drugs and alcohol. Serenity Mesa provides individual and group therapy, case management, life skills, high school and GED classes, rental assistance and after care services. We take Medicaid and services that are non billable are free.

Southwest Organizing Project

Youth/Family Mentor: Darla Chavez and Loren Gomez

Organization Rep: Rodrigo Rodriguez, Justice Systems Community Organizer
www.swop.net/youth-justice (Year Founded: 1980)



The mission of the Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP) is to “empower disenfranchised communities in the Southwest United States to realize racial and gender equality and social and economic justice.” Today, we build power alongside our members, partners, and allies in three main areas: economic power, political power and cultural power. To achieve our focus, we have strategically created SWOP as an organizing hub for our members, partners and allies; a cutting-edge community engagement lab that invests in savvy cultural strategies and infrastructure; and a home-based community and movement building institution. We uplift community voices by leveraging strategic partnerships, policies, and systems changes that represent the needs and values of children, families, and our communities.



Together for Brothers

Impacted Community Mentor: Angel Gallardo and David Grubbs

*Organization Rep: Christopher Ramirez, Executive Director
and Baruch Campos, Program Coordinator*

www.togetherforbrothers.org (Year Founded: 2015)



Be Brotherly.

Together for Brothers (T4B) partners across New Mexico with self-identified young men of color (YMOC) and allies to build power, demand justice and create change. We center and engage self-identified YMOC ages 12-24 who are connected (live, work, play, pray or learn) in Albuquerque’s International District (87108 and 87123) and Westgate (87121). We offer seasonal programming in civic engagement, economic justice, health & healing justice and leadership programs. T4B works with approximately 150 YMOC participants per year with an impact of more than 500 YMOC, families, community partners and other stakeholders annually.

Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico

Impacted Community Mentor: Mae Kluckman

Organization Rep: Wyatt Day, Youth and Families Program Manager

www.tgrcnm.org (Year Founded: 2008)



The Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico provides advocacy, education, and direct services in support of transgender, gender nonconforming, nonbinary, and gender variant people and their families. We operate a drop-in center that offers a wide variety of services and assistance. We host and facilitate support groups and provide trainings on transgender lives and issues for any class, workplace or group that invites us. And we run a Food Access Project that address issues of food insecurity and chronic hunger in the trans community within a social justice framework. The Transgender Resource Center supports approximately 500 people annually across New Mexico.

United South Broadway Corporation

Impacted Community Mentor:

*Organization Rep: Diana Dorn Jones, Executive Director
and Henry Douglas, Associate*

www.unitedsouthbroadway.org/our-people (Year Founded: 1986)



USBC

United South Broadway Corporation (USBC) not only believes that Black Lives Matter, we believe that a shared analysis and understanding of racism, its history, and its institutional structure is essential to building and maintaining healthy communities. This is why we have been doing anti-racism training in the community for decades. In 1991 we established ARTI, The Anti-Racism Training Institute of the Southwest, to address institutional racism in New Mexico. In addition to our work promoting racial



equity, USBC has been helping New Mexico communities prosper since 1986 by promoting fair housing, fair lending, crime prevention, financial literacy, locally-based commercial development, opportunities for youth.

VIZIONZ-SANKOFA

Impacted Community Mentor:

Organization Rep: Khadijah Bottom, Founder/Director

www.myvizionz.org (Year Founded: 2014)

VIZIONZ-SANKOFA aims to educate, elevate and empower African American youth and young adults and African Refugees on becoming stewards of their lives. Our motto is, “Seeing into the future while going back to our roots to obtain knowledge to move forward.” Programs include: tutoring, mentorship, job search support and job skills development, housing and rental assistance. We serve an average of 350 people annually.



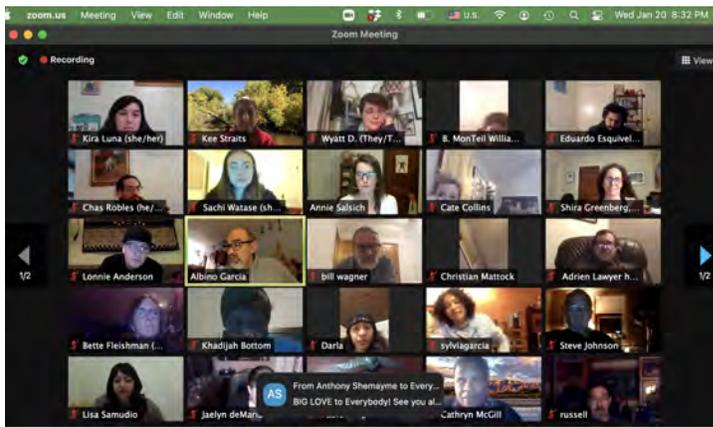
Youth Development, Inc.

Impacted Community Member:

Organization Rep: Judy Pacheco www.ydinm.org (Year Founded: 1971)

As one of the largest community and family-based agencies in New Mexico, Youth Development, Inc. (YDI) offers high quality services in early childhood education, mental and behavioral health, education, employment and career training in 16 counties throughout the state. At YDI, we are always trying to find a better way to partner with families to solve life’s problems by providing an accepting environment that offers diverse services that have proven results. It is our belief that supporting youth also involves supporting the family. Today, YDI provides 60+ programs through 3 Divisions: Education and Employment and Training, Early Headstart/Headstart and Prevention, Intervention and Behavioral Health Services. Over 4,000 families and 5,000 individuals were helped through YDI services during the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year. 823 Volunteer hours were provided through the Education Employment and Training Division.

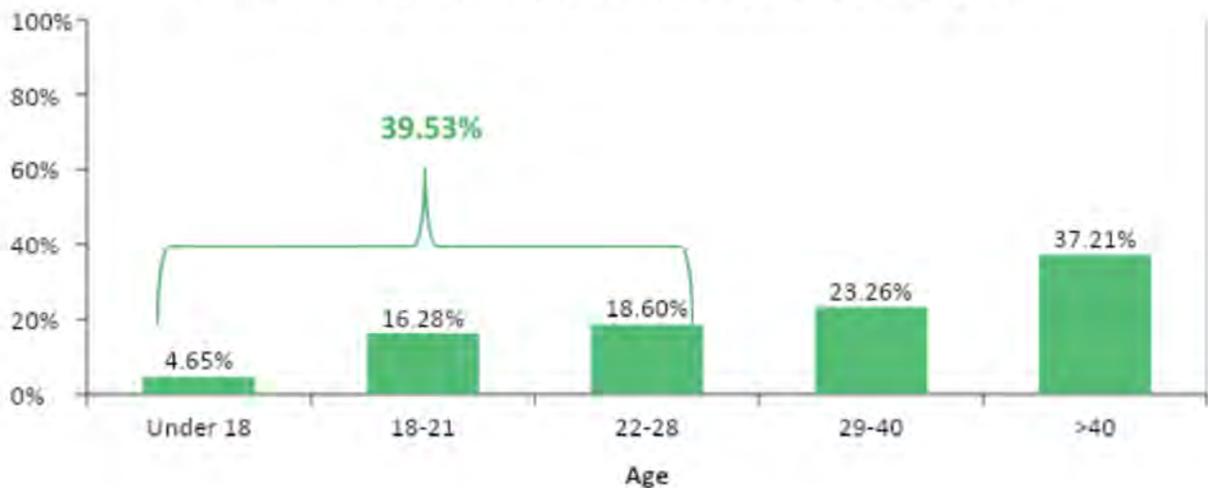




In order to learn more about the individuals who compose the Collaborative, we also looked at demographics of the group itself, as well as the communities that each organization serves. In an April survey of collaborative members where we received 44 responses, we found that almost 40% of Collaborative members were youth (28 years or younger). By the end of 2021, we increased our membership of youth who were 21 and under from

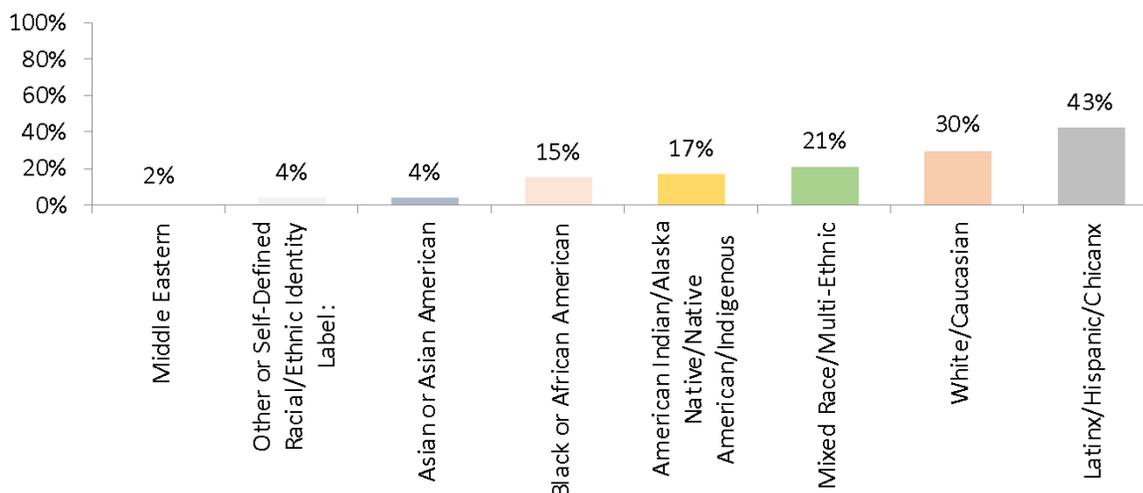
21% to 35% of the membership.

Over one-third (39.53%) of Collaborative members are youth





Most Collaborative members (81%) represent people of color communities*



The December 2021 survey asked Collaborative members to “select all that apply” for racial and ethnic identification. Based on member responses, 81% of Collaborative members identified as people of color, while only 19% of Collaborative members identified as White only.

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) primarily serve communities of color including African Americans, Native Americans/Indigenous, Hispanic/Chicano/Latinx, Asian Pacific Islander, and multi-racial individuals. Other characteristics of communities that are served include LGBTQ+, immigrants, undocumented, low-income, people with disabilities, survivors of crime, mental health, substance use, and unstable housing individuals. Most CBOs serve over 100 youth in a year, some up to 500 youth. Two CBOs serve 1000+ youth each year. Based on data provided by community based organization representatives in an initial survey, the estimated number of youth served by the combined membership is over 12,050, and additional information provided showed that more than 27,000 total individuals (youth and adults) are served annually by CBOs in the Collaborative.

Design Team

The design team was brought together between September and December 2020 to be the conduit, the glue, and the central planning and organization team for the larger collaborative. The Design Team meets weekly on Zoom and works to plan each meeting, to co-learn, and find ways to include multiple voices and visions in each aspect of the work. The Collaborative’s design is guided by Albino Garcia. In addition to the detailed planning and visioning work done, the design team also co-learns about complex systems and symbols through the lens of multiple cultures. Garcia provides nontraditional leadership development through the shared responsibilities of the design team’s members.

Design Team members include:

- Albino Garcia, Executive Director, La Plazita Institute
- Annie Salsich, Annie E. Casey liaison and consultant
- Norma Gamble



- Joe Garcia
- Sylvia Garcia
- Sonia Ornelas
- Erik Rivera
- Monset Rodriguez-Rico
- Lisa Samudio
- Pablo Soto
- Russell Urban

Documentation Team

The documentation team was established in December 2020 with the aim of serving the Collaborative in telling its collective story. The act of documentation was framed by Garcia in reflecting the responsibilities of the Nahuatl [Tlaquilo](#) who serves as a historian and a scribe, communicating through painting, writing, and illustration. The documentation team translates these aspects in the multimedia work that we do, collaboratively through painting, drawing, poetry, journaling, photography, and storytelling. The Documentation Team acknowledges diverse ways of communicating and uplifts the artistic and poetic messages created by Collaborative members.

Team Members:

Jaelyn deMaría, Ph.D (Urban Xicana, Martineztown, Albuquerque)

Documentation Team Project Lead/Creative Consultant

Jaelyn was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is honored to sit on the Collaborative, together with family, friends, and colleagues, in the movement for justice. She is a multimedia producer who aims to uplift strengths-based community narratives and solutions with unique multimedia communication strategies. Her work appears in traditional academic presses and in web-based interactive projects, gallery shows, unique public installations, and exhibits. She learned from complex narratives of justice, histories and cultures in New Mexico through her work as a journalist for the state's largest newspaper. Her work focuses on intentional aspects of narrative shift, especially in relationship to health communication, place-based narrative strategies, and justice. She often centers photography and oral history as methods to meet community goals. Her experiences, as well as her own research, are deeply rooted in the complex cultures and landscapes of New Mexico. Her lived experience as a Xicana woman and creator influence all aspects of her work.

Kee Straits, Ph.D (Quechua, urban Native/Indígena)

Documentation Team Member

Kee is a mother, wife, mentor, community member, and Indigenous Latina woman (Quechua, born in Perú). She is a licensed psychologist, educator, and CEO of Tinkuy Life Community Transformations. Dedicated to health equity, she engages in research, practice, supervision, and evaluation. She has provided therapy for 14 years to children and families affected by trauma, substance abuse, violence, and cultural disconnection. She offers consultation to schools, organizations, and communities in New Mexico to develop and implement community-driven, culturally-centered systems change that enhances youth thriving. More recently, she has been



engaging in storytelling projects that combine creativity and science, and that allow her the freedom of drawing on Indigenous knowledge and practices. She believes in the power of community and uplifting our inner cultural selves to heal through collaborative storytelling and visioning a thriving future for our youth. Dr. Straits is blessed to have her heart and home in Albuquerque, New Mexico, with her husband who is Diné, her daughter, and many animals.

Mikayla Trujillo

Youth Intern

Mikayla Trujillo, CPSW/CCHW has strong roots in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Mikayla has been with the ABQ Justice for Youth Collaboration since the Genesis of the collaboration, over a year ago. Mikayla is a Peer with lived experience around overcoming adversity including mental health, substance use, and incarceration that ultimately lead to her becoming a CCHW in her community and the Capacity Building Coordinator at the National Association of Community Health Workers. Mikayla's passion began as she re-entered her own community and tirelessly assisted those affected by mental health, precariously housed individuals, system impacted youth, and employment seeking returning citizens in achieving their personal goals, located at a small Non-Profit, Albuquerque Center for Hope & Recovery, which she keeps close to her heart and visits regularly. She continued her success at the University of New Mexico under a Prison Hepatitis C elimination program as a Program Coordinator working with incarcerated Peer Educators at all 12 prisons across New Mexico as well as returning citizens in the community, providing resources for peers on Adult Probation & Parole supervision. Mikayla is proud to be advocating for the many previously incarcerated persons seeking a valuable role as a CCHW in their communities. Mikayla is currently leading the youth documentation team and assists the Design team on a regular basis. Mikayla's monthly highlight is spending time in the virtual meeting community with members she deeply relates to.

Emani Brooks

Youth Intern

My name is Emani Brooks and I am a youth leader at Keshet Dance Center for the Arts and Co-Chair/creator of Keshet's Arts and Justice Initiatives Youth Leadership Council, in addition to my role as a youth intern for the Collaborative's Documentation Team. In my last few years of high school I became heavily involved in understanding the justice system and how I can be proactive due to my own legal situation(s); Bernalillo county board meetings (JDAI; juvenile detention alternatives initiatives, Case Processing, Deep End) were insightful to my progress in these steps and allowed me to meet new people, Albino Garcia being one of them, but I wanted more. When Albino approached me about this Collaborative I was excited. Being able to bring all the organizations together that are rooted in giving support to the youth in my community was inspiring. Youth were given a space and a platform to express their feelings/experiences without judgement which is what many of us wanted, to just be heard. To grow as a family has been my favorite part of the collaborative; furthermore, I am looking to the progress we continue to make-- together!



Chris Wall (Ute Mountain Ute, Colorado),
Youth Post-Baccalaureate Intern

I grew up in the Rez called Towaoc. I am an intern for TLC Transformations. One of my passions is psychology. I got my bachelor's degree in psychology from Fort Lewis College. I was part of an organization called Indian Society of Psychologists. I want to use my experience and knowledge to help people.

Lonnie Anderson, (Jicarilla Apache, Mexhika, Chichimeca)
Photographer/Filmmaker

Anderson has worked with Mr. Spike Lee on the NAACP and ABC's Black History Month; Pulitzer Prize nominated poet and filmmaker Jimmy Santiago Baca on a youth literacy and film program; collaborating with American Indian Movement AIM founders Dennis Banks and Russell Means on substance and alcohol abuse prevention programs; and working with world renowned peace activist Lily Yeh on peace projects. He is a former Board Member and gang interventionist at the La Plazita Institute, which works with Native youth in jails and prisons. He is an executive producer on a film about Native American gangs called The Seventh Fire and in collaboration with Natalie Portman and Terrence Malick. This film premiered at the Berlin Film Festival and was shown at the Obama White House.

Loucia José (Diné)
Documentation Team Member

Loucia is from the community of Crownpoint, NM located on the Navajo Nation. She offers over nine years of expertise in data analysis, program management, and evaluation. She has worked with multiple Tribal communities in NM from direct service providers to community members. She has supported Tribal communities with program planning, monitored progress towards goals and outcomes, and assisted with efforts to collect program and community-wide survey data. She also has experience collecting interview and focus group data. She strives to focus on the strengths, not deficits, to support a stronger healthy future for the communities' she works with.

Documentation Framework

The initial frame for documentation included four elements of storytelling that aim to support community collaborative story-building and healing.

(1) Collaborative Histories

The first element is rooted in oral and visual histories and involves interviewing Collaborative members using an oral history method for opening space for storytelling. More than 70% of Collaborative members were interviewed in this way over the first year. All Collaborative members were invited to participate in workshops, storytelling opportunities, and two surveys that further help to tell the Collaborative's collective story.

(2) Inside-Out: Rooted in Place

The second element is rooted in an inside-out perspective through documentation that recognizes the expertise and knowledge of those with lived experience and involvement in systems of incarceration in Albuquerque specifically. This document intends to uplift



Collaborative member's stories and amplify the solutions provided from a place-based perspective.

(3) Storytelling

The third element acknowledges modern, traditional, and ancient forms of storytelling, including multimedia production and all artistic and creative forms of media. Collaborative members were invited to contribute art and story as contributions to the larger narrative for justice. A prototype website for the Albuquerque Justice 4 Youth Collaborative was created and presented to the design team in December. The site includes a landing page, a page featuring the cultural context and mission the collaborative is guided by and space for youth-led media. The page will also connect to the Collaborative's social media pages as the Collaborative develops them.

(4) Solutions-Oriented Storytelling

The fourth element is tied to the practice of solutions journalism that focuses on responses and solutions to social issues. "It examines instances where people, institutions, and communities are working toward solutions. Solutions--based stories focus not just on what may be working, but how and why it appears to be working, or, alternatively, why it may be stumbling" (Center for Media Engagement). The Collaborative's model breaks from traditional models of journalism in several ways. As one example, there is no aim for objectivity as the documentation team comes from within the community we document. We are tied through family, through ceremony, and beliefs. The aim is for these complex and rich elements to result in collaborative story-building and healing through a media justice lens.



“Makes me think, in other groups or coalitions, we should make time for impacted youth (and families) to share their stories as opportunities to build relationships and practice the important tool of storytelling.”

-Christopher Ramirez, Collaborative Member, Together 4 Brothers



Rationale for the Collaborative

The Collaborative justifies the work through the expressed lived experiences of its members and through evidence-based data that shows disproportionate negative impacts of incarceration for youth in New Mexico. The collaborative's invitation for membership states:

“Systemic racism persists in the juvenile justice system in Albuquerque, the state of New Mexico, and across the country. Authentic partnerships between the system and the communities that are most impacted are few and far between. Real progress toward social justice and racial healing will require a radical change in the current balance of power—a change that empowers the young people and families who have lived experience and a change that is grounded in community leadership and partnership.”

Prior to colonization, the caretakers of the original lands of Turtle Island were 18 million strong with over 500 autonomous nations. These nations had developed vast multi-lingual cities with rich infrastructures, far-reaching trade systems, inter-national diplomacy, complex architectural, scientific and mathematical applications within social lives, as well as deep funds of ecological, medicinal and philosophical social knowledge built over centuries. Each nation's justice system and government reflected the particular values of that community. Indigenous justice prior to colonization reflected an emphasis on repairing the offender's relationship with the community and restoring harmony through means such as ceremony and medicine ([LaFortune, 2019](#)).

[The history of youth incarceration in the United States](#) begins with understanding that the legal, educational, health, economic, social and political systems were grounded in White supremacist colonial beliefs and birthed through violence, subjugation, and oppression. First contact from European colonizers brought disease decimating Native communities across Turtle Island, most of whom had never even seen a settler. Disease left children parentless. Puritanical beliefs that colonizers held about children being born into sin were applied to Native American peoples as a whole. Ensuing land wars and government-supported genocide of Native peoples left Native children as damaged collateral dependent on the state for their livelihood. Navajo and Apache people here in New Mexico who refused to forfeit their lands, languages, spiritual beliefs, worldviews, and familial ties, were forcibly removed from their homelands to be [incarcerated in Bosque Redondo](#), starved, prostituted, and enslaved in what is known as Hwéeldi or the Long Walk. The underlying assumption that Native people were “wild,” “savage,” or less than human allowed for this treatment and echoed in early educational policies of Native children as articulated by Richard H. Pratt's, [“kill the Indian, save the man”](#). In 1881, the Presbyterian Church opened the [Albuquerque Indian School](#) to assimilate and strip children of their Native cultures while training them for subservient positions within White households. As boarding schools declined, removing children from their families became so common that by 1969, one-third of Native children were adopted into White families.



(Top) 1909 Albuquerque, New Mexico *Albuquerque Indian School Women's Sewing Class*. Glass plate negative 5 x 7 in. Albuquerque Museum PA2011.003.745

(Bottom) [Albuquerque Indian Boarding School photo](#) Original Albuquerque Indian Boarding School, established in 1881 at Duranes, New Mexico Territory; ca. 1881; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75.

These legacies of dehumanizing children of color continue on in our current youth justice and other institutionalizing systems such as foster care. Our country's history of enslavement of Black people is etched in the American psyche with the enduring idea of racial inferiority. Black children were "human property" to slave owners who had indisputable say in meting out justice ([Bell, 2016](#)). Our current policing system has its origins in [Slave Patrols](#) that were created to incite fear in slaves to prevent uprisings. Even when slavery was abolished, the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution provided necessary loopholes to continue enslavement of Black people through legal means ([Goodwin, 2019](#)). After slavery was abolished, a set of laws named the Black Codes, convict leasing practices, chain gangs and



prison labor exploitation followed ([Brown, J., 2007](#)). [A report on racial disparities in the U.S. justice system to the United Nations Rapporteur](#), cites that one out of every three Black boys born in 2001 can expect to go to prison at some point in their lifetime. It also cites that Black youth made up 35% of juvenile arrests in 2016, despite being only 15% of the youth population. The overrepresentation of Black people in policing and prison systems, including disparate rates of policing, arrest, harsh sentencing and length of stay, is by design, not by accident.



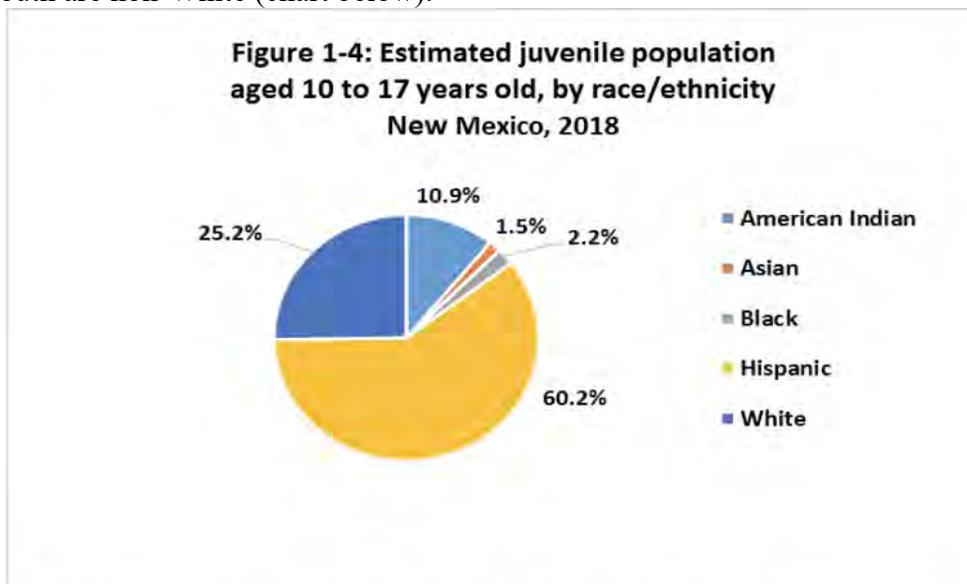
Scene in Western North Carolina, courtesy of Millions for Reparations ([Brown, J., 2007](#))

Similar histories of criminalizing language, ethnic, and cultural differences while also intentionally dehumanizing the racial “other” exist throughout the United States’ history of colonization. Whether we are talking about our earlier history of [zoot-suit riots of 1943 targeting Mexican-American youth](#), [Japanese American internment camps from 1942 to 1945](#) who were largely children and young adults not of voting age, [the U.S. war on drugs](#) stereotyping and disparately sentencing youth of color, or more recent history of arresting peaceful, unarmed water protectors at Standing Rock, or the separation of migrant children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border and placing them in juvenile detention facilities, all of these cumulative events contribute to the political and sociocultural context for ongoing egregious disparities in justice systems. Inequities in the justice system are also closely linked to educational inequities such as school discipline disparities that underlie school-to-prison pipelines for youth of color.



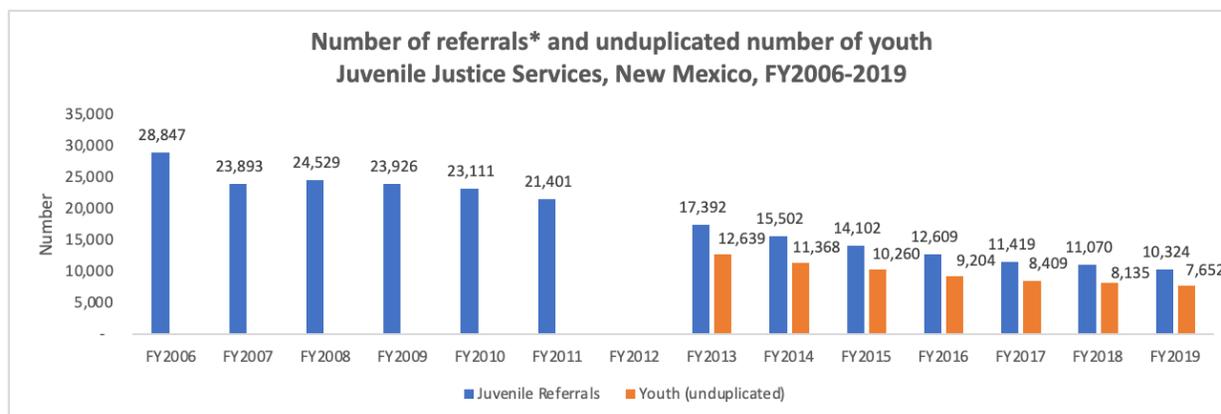
Juvenile Justice Statistics in New Mexico

New Mexico is a majority minority state and based on data in the [New Mexico Juvenile Justice Services Fiscal Report 2019](#), the youth population ages 10 to 17 reflects that 75% of our youth are non-White (chart below).



Source: Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. *Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2018*. Available at: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>

The next chart shows trend data from 2006 to 2019 for the total number of referrals to juvenile justice in New Mexico and the number of unduplicated youth who have been referred. Overall, referrals have been trending down over the 14 years. In that same time period, the New Mexico juvenile population, ages 10 to 17, has also decreased from 237,910 youth in 2002 to 223,085 youth in 2018.



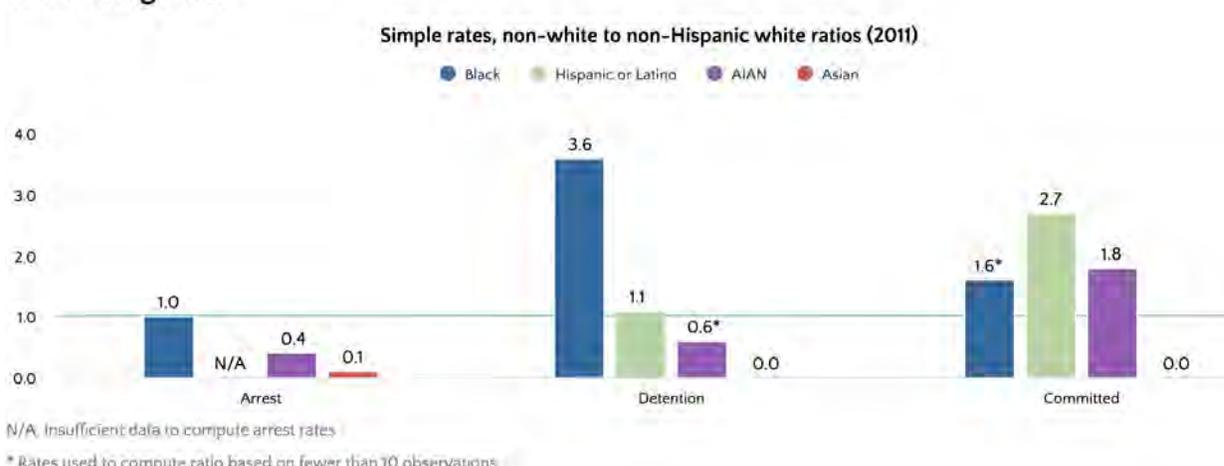
*Numbers include delinquent, probation violation and status (non-delinquent) referrals.

Despite downward trends in referral rates, monitoring data from 2011 ([Juvenile Justice Geography, Policy, Practice and Statistics](#)) indicates that Black youth experience disproportionate detention rates compared to non-Hispanic White youth. In addition,



commitment rates for Black, Hispanic and Native American youth are disproportionately higher than for non-Hispanic White youth.

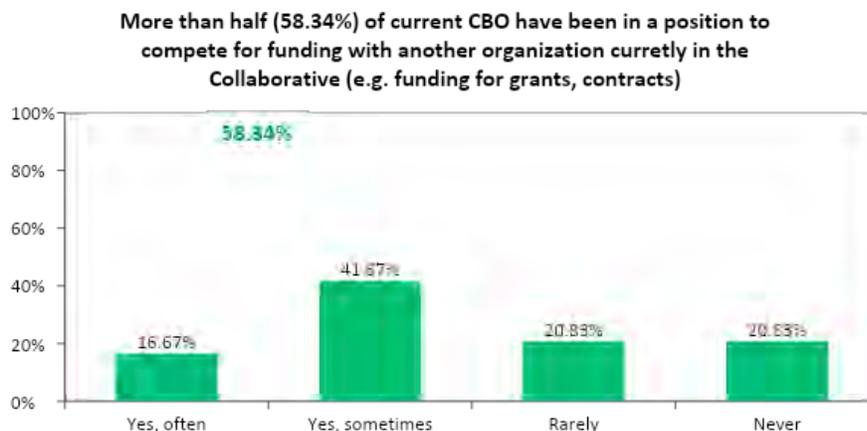
Monitoring data



The United States has the world’s highest incarceration rates with a ratio of 664 per 100,000 (prisonpolicy.org). New Mexico has a higher incarceration rate than the United States as a whole at 733 per 100,000. Compared to other states, New Mexico has the 13th highest ranking of youth incarceration with a ratio of 227 to every 100,000 youth incarcerated (aclu.org). Although nationwide, tribal youth are more than three times as likely to be arrested than White youth, New Mexico has been able to reduce their disparities for tribal youth incarceration by 81% from 2010 to 2019 in a positive trend for New Mexico (Sentencing Project).

Bringing Together Community Stakeholders

New Mexico has a history of grassroots community innovation with numerous local efforts to work on different aspects of child well-being. However, New Mexico’s ability to develop alternative community-based solutions for supporting youth who might otherwise be tracked into prison pipelines has been severely limited by lack of funding, collective political will, siloing of alternative systems, and lack of recognizing community innovations and assets. When potential grants are available, community-based organizations are often placed into competitive situations in order to obtain the funding which runs counter to harnessing collective power of collaboration. In an initial survey of Collaborative members, almost 60% of the community-based organizations reported having previously had to compete with other organizations in the Collaborative for funding.





In addition to having been in a position to compete for funding, organizational representatives shared other potential barriers or challenges to collaborative efforts, including: 1) working and coordinating on a shared vision and goals rather than focus on individual organization activities; 2) having limited time to get involved; and, 3) undesirable past experiences with other organizations or collaborative efforts.

“Focusing a lot on our own organization and goals. Or intentionally giving enough time or energy to authentic relationship building, lack of creativity or willingness. Not seeing the connections in our impact.”

“The time for involvement and the patience to continue in these challenging times.”

“History, unresolved issues, infighting, closed door decision making, shit talking.”

(survey responses)

Thus, the initiation of the Collaborative began with efforts to provide all organizations with an equal part of the funding, a concerted effort to create positive relationships, and a grounding in community-centered, cultural values to guide mutual efforts.

Before the First Sun

Before the First Sun, Garcia established the importance of journeying inward with the design and documentation teams. He gave a *plática* on how he envisioned the *Quinto Sol* model could be applied to the Collaborative. He said that when the Casey Foundation came to him and asked what would it take to do authentic and genuine community collaboration and engagement, he responded that it would require us, as community, to go inward and to journey back to what the core virtues and values of community engagement are among ourselves before interfacing with the system. The primary work is focused on framing a juvenile justice narrative by community stakeholders, providers, collaborators, and community people.

“We have to go back in time and begin to relate as five fingered beings and get in touch with our community humanity *otra vez* because we have been forced, for so long, to scrap with each other, and jockey for position for resources to do the work we want to do as community, and many of those resources are controlled by the system and we begin to act accordingly. So, the first journey for the collaborative is inward.” - Albino Garcia

In contrast to Western-driven values that emphasize product and action, the Collaborative intentionally spent the first year cultivating relationships within and between partner organizations. Despite the fact that many of the community organizations at the table have a strong reputation for community activism and action, the vast majority of collaborative members provided feedback that they appreciated the time spent on learning about each other. In the initial survey where collaborative members were asked “What do you want to see achieved in Year 1 that would keep you an active Collaborative member?”, one of the top three categories of responses centered on building relationships.



What do you want to achieve in the first year of the Justice for Youth Collaborative?

*“Building relationships and acting together
for justice and healing.”*

Garcia proposed that the first steps be *conocimiento* and relational work among ourselves as a “collaborative of collaboratives” and a “family of families”. He describes the spark as, “the fire that goes back to our molecular structure and the synaptic gap. In-between those transmitters is the spark, the essence of life that goes back millions and millions of years.” He further acknowledged that, we’re constantly journeying and learning on the inward path, assuming that we can never journey elsewhere first. The first step is inward.

The work involves going deep into history to understand the roots of both our problems and solutions. The collaborative Introduced slides that traced the history of youth imprisonment and enslavement.

The screenshot shows a Google Slides presentation titled "African American Experience". The main slide features a timeline from 1619 to 2000. A red bar represents "AMERICAN SLAVERY" from 1619 to 1865, labeled "246 years". A yellow bar represents "SEGREGATION" from 1865 to 1954, labeled "89 years". The timeline continues to 2000. The presentation interface includes a sidebar with slide thumbnails, a top menu bar, and a video call window on the right with participants Jaelyn deMaria, sylvia Garcia, Lisa Samudio, and Pablo Soto.



FIRST SUN

Tecpatl (flint knife)

“The Journey Inward”



Acatl, Codex Magliabechiano

Tecpatl represents the *chispa* - the spark - the creation story and what it fuses together: Earth, air, fire and water, which is what we're made of. It represents the inner world and it reflects in us when we work with our people, community and ourselves by, “cutting to the marrow of truth” (Delgadillo, 2007). The first passage is inward, so the Collaborative is taken on a journey inward to explore core identity, beyond all of the sub identities, including identities that we assume, negative identities, imposed identities, gang identities.



MEETING OVERVIEW: January 20th (1st Sun- Internal Journey)

(CUAUTLI/COZCACUAUHTLI- Eagle/Condor)

- Overview of the purpose of the Collaborative:
 - Mission: Our aim is to: honor and strengthen our community self-determination; reduce (and eventually eliminate) dependence on the juvenile justice system; and keep youth safe at home and supported by the capable hands of their own communities.
- Inauguration Day 2021
- Significance of January 20th across cultures and time
- Quinto Sol Framework (Albino)
 - The structure and view of the 1st year (slide of Quinto Sol Framework)
 - 1st – getting to know each other and the group, getting back in touch with ourselves, as an impacted community, re-discovering each other
 - 2nd – focus on impacted young people and families – that we serve and that we are.
 - 3rd – talking about communities, focus on particular communities, challenges, what they see, forms of oppression, what it looks like, what it feels like, what the solutions are, etc.
 - 4th – systems that impact us and have influence on us. Economic, justice, education, and politics.
 - 5th – a recap of all 4 and culmination of all. Bring it all together. The spirit of the work, of collaboration, of culture, of challenge of surviving and thriving.
- Details on why **THIS** collaboration is needed and is so important – what is **NOT** happening in local, state, national “reform” work. Who is making the decisions and who is not. All controlled by the system. System-impacted mentor role importance.
- Current lay of the land:
 - The sheer number of kids in detention, on probation, and committed (broken-down by race and ethnicity). How many are from your/our neighborhoods?
 - The cost
 - The structure (the visual of the committees both at local and state level and who runs them)
- Snapshot of history- with some visuals from Burns Institute powerpoint
 - Order:
 - Indigenous Colonization/Assimilation
 - Slavery
 - Chinese, Rail Workers
 - Chung Mei Slide
 - Decades Chinese worked on railroads
 - Latino /Chicano
 - “Super Predator” language in the 80’s and 90’s
 - Tying it all back to the present time
- Breakout Session:
 - What does genuine & authentic inclusion, collaboration, & healing look like to you?
- Documentation Team: Introductions to Who We Are & Quinto Sol Model for Documentation

In the first Sun, we go within the Collaborative to understand our own identities. We engaged in this process over two months, January and February 2021, as a newly born collective. On January 20, 47 individuals were in attendance by Zoom, representing 25



organizations. Earlier that day, Joe Biden was sworn in as the 46th president of the United States. The country was on-edge from the January 6th Insurrection when the country's false narrative of justice was publicly exposed, deconstructed and divided along racial lines as right-wing rioters attacked the U.S. Capital building in support of White supremacist beliefs and Donald Trump's "big lie" that fueled hatred and division across the nation. There were some concerns about moving forward with the Collaborative's first meeting due to the threat of another round of nation-wide violence on Inauguration Day, but the needs of young people in Albuquerque were prioritized and the virtual gathering marked the beginning of the Albuquerque Justice for Youth Community Collaborative. During the opening meeting, members explored the history of juvenile justice, impacts on our communities, and the mission of the collective. We began to develop ceremony in reciting our vision, community norms and expectations to establish positive relationships, and online norms for connecting with each other. Each Collaborative meeting begins with a different collaborative member offering intention, prayer or blessings in their own way and language. Then, Garcia laid out the intention and cultural context for the Collaborative. It was observed that, at the exact moment when Garcia was relaying the significance of the shift in the day's symbolic sign from Eagle, *Cuautli*, to Condor, *Cozcacuatli*, the sign changed on the calendar. It should also be noted that an indigenous story known on this continent tells of the indication of peace through the joint flight of the Eagle and the Condor.

After the large-group discussion, we broke into smaller groups to introduce ourselves and share ideas on authentic inclusion, collaboration, and healing from our diverse perspectives. Collaborative members also began to interrogate problems that exist and the solutions they envision. Some of the contributions to the conversation are below:

Mañpíya Black Elk spoke about the prison industrial complex:

"No good comes from it and we have to do better. We live in a terrible world that ignores our children; where we allow children to be homeless, where we allow children to go hungry, where we allow any people to do that in our society, we live in a backwards society and it infuriates me that people profit off of this bullshit. There are times that I feel very helpless, I feel like I'm trying to scoop up sand from an ocean and it's a never-ending task and no matter how hard you do it, no matter how much you feel like you're doing it, it feels like it's endless. And it feels like you're on a daunting mission like that. Part of me feels excited to do work like this, but another part of me feels, to be honest, skeptical when there is money to be made. The brutality of greedy people knows no ends and so I think there is a lot of work to do and I think that some of the things that need to be said aren't going to be popular."

Cathryn McGill spoke about moving beyond diversity and data analysis through an equity lens:

"Business as usual devolves into tokenism, one of each is surface level intervention."



She wants to see the collaborative’s work to go beyond diversity and equity and inclusion to humanism, “so that my interests are represented whether I’m in the room or not.”

Data:

“When we are using it for decision support, that the people who are analyzing it have an equity lens in mind and they look at it from all angles and understand how it will be received by the people it’s being presented to.”

Process:

“We need to get to know each other and have our voices heard in the space, having a growth mindset and overcoming skepticism . . . We will prevail if we can speak the brutal truth to each other.”

Eric Pacheco spoke about culture and institutionalization:



Photo by Jaelyn deMaria

“I’m cultureless. I was born here in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I went to 11 different schools in four different states in my first eight years, and no culture. What some people fail to realize when we talk about culture - the problem is we’re already assimilated and to tear it down and think we’re going to start from scratch, I think that’s a mistake because we’re already assimilated, at least I am. And then you have subcultures and I think they are real cultures, I was asked one time, ‘What culture do you belong to?’ and I said, ‘The culture of incarceration and drug use in America, that’s my culture’ and, so, how does it look like to integrate it, to tear it down, get rid of it and start our own thing? Crazy! Some of us are already institutionalized or believe that we might be institutionalized and are used to it. So, collaboration has to go through all parts and the transition has to happen. Radical change is good, but it starts one step at a time.”



B. MonTeil Williams spoke about dysfunctional systems that should support families, identifying root causes and solutions:

“So I think it’s really getting to those root issues one-by-one with kids/people who are willing to work with someone without a judgement and being able to validate why they are that way. It doesn’t excuse any of the behaviors that are getting them where they’re going to, to the detention center, but there is a reason.”

Solution:

“Each individual building up their soul so that they can be a productive person in society”

Evan Voth spoke about benefits of mentorship:

“How do I help (young people) to find their own values without me projecting my own values? . . . How do we help young people really come into themselves and become themselves and find what they’re passionate about?”

Solution:

“I was always missing something, and then I found it when I started finding these positive mentors in my life and really showing me these are the things you can do with your life and you can achieve and you can become whatever you want to be in life.”

Shira Greenberg spoke about money and politics:

The Collaborative should be community driven and community responsive:

“What I mean by that is that it is fluid and nimble and that it’s always changing and always responsive to every single person. It’s not a program that is a cookie cutter, which also means it’s not a program, it’s a relationship and it’s a long-term relationship forever and it’s collaborative, not competitive”

Knowing power, money:

“Can we use the money in better ways? Yes, we can take that \$74 million dollars and completely come up with a better structure than a government entity has for community.”

“Knowing that there is this politic game to play; that there is also a way to change that story and translate that game to redirect this government funding to community efforts/community responsiveness. . . There is a way for that same game to be played and for it to be flipped on its head so that there is a return to the government entity by them redirecting this to community.”

Khadijah Bottom spoke about changing laws:

“Whatever we do, we know that we’re gonna have to change the mindset of the powers that be. We know that no matter what we do from our grassroots level, that there’s still



somebody that we're gonna have to go through; and that's coming from the governor down, start at the top, those laws on the books have to be changed, those laws on the books are probably way older than I am and that's still what they're still operating off of."

Christopher Ramirez spoke about how healing involves community organizing for systems change and budget allocation:

"It's not just CYFD's \$70 million-plus budget that needs to be reallocated. It's actually billions of dollars". He references:

- 220 million for Albuquerque Police Department
- 13 million Albuquerque Public Schools Police department
- 3.3 billion for ICE / homeland security / immigrant community
- Bernalillo County Police budget
- State police budget

Rodrigo Rodriguez spoke about getting people out of certain mindsets:

"How do we challenge ourselves and challenge systems and powers-that-be to imagine a world where we don't put kids in cages. In a state like New Mexico that deals with generations of colonization and generational traumas; I was a sixth grader the first time my momma had to go pick me up at the D home and then I spent the rest of my life still dealing with the criminal justice system so how do we change outcomes for our kids, how do we imagine this radical future where we don't put kids in cages? We don't do right by our children here in New Mexico. How do we challenge ourselves to really think radically and act radically to do that?"

Bill Wagner spoke about resources and community intervention:

"I think of this idea of a dead society, where all the resources of a society are going into repressing the same society and that's where we're at."

"If you add to the cost of incarcerating kids the cost of healthcare and how much we spend way downstream in their interventions. If we can get out of these silos of budgeting thinking about our society, I think we're at a turning point."

"We want (Centros Avila) to partner and think bigger than our intervention is just a one-on-one session, this is community psychology, this is community intervention."



YOUTH PERSPECTIVES

Youth developed joint definitions of authentic inclusion, collaboration and healing. Emani, Christian, Darla, Isaiah, Mohammed, Isaiah, Baruch & Angel (Sylvia & Lisa facilitating)

Inclusion

- ❖ “It has to come from the community if it is going to be authentic. If the community’s involved and the youth see that people care, they respond to that. Having the community to talk with and get invited to different places and have different views.”
- ❖ “Communication is being able to talk with each other without being offended, providing detail without taking it any kind of way, and allowing each other to speak with no judgment and no making fun”
- ❖ “The right way to come together is people who have actually experienced being in jail. It would make a way bigger difference than having those who didn’t. Those who didn’t could help us.”
- ❖ “Those who have experienced it should have a voice.”

Collaboration

- ❖ “We [the youth] are doing all the work and doing community work ... I do hope that when we do collaborate, that the youth that they choose get to do work that means something to them, and are able to claim the work that they do, get the credit for it. Youth don’t do this stuff because they don’t get rewarded for it, money, or food. I hope that with this we actually make a difference and do the work we want to do.”
- ❖ “Community, collaboration & healing is taking the time to listen to how youth speak and how they’re able to put in what they are comfortable putting in, so they are a part of it, but so that it is not uncomfortable for them.”
- ❖ “Youth being at the forefront. Youth being the facilitators, talkers, giving the information out. It is our futures and our present. Healing comes in that because it healed me a lot to be able to talk about my experiences. Speaking my truth, through collaboration given to me and inclusion that I had.”

Healing

- ❖ “[What stood out to me in the data shown was] how many people get on juvenile probation every year. You can be 15 years old and mess up, and then you have to be on probation for 3 years, and it is so much time to mess up again. That’s why I suggest that they give physical and mental therapy.”
- ❖ “I think it’s like after you go through a traumatic state, you find yourself how you are going to get back up from how you just fell down. The healing process is learning how you are going to keep stepping forward after an incident happens.”
- ❖ “Authentic healing looks like listening to each other, our peers, our elders, and recognizing that we all have assets and we all are assets. We grow up hearing all the negative stigmas about ourselves. Recognizing ourselves and our communities as assets and leaders.”



MEETING OVERVIEW: February 24th (1st Sun- Internal Journey)

(OZOMAHTLI-Monkey/Friendship/Music/Dance)

- Internal complicity, healing, listen to youth
- Breakout Session 1: In Depth Introductions
 - How have you been impacted & what is your stance on justice for youth?
 - How might we be complicit? (to injustice/systemic oppression/the generational and historical trauma)
 - How do we begin to heal complicities? (Not as a group, not as an organization...you, personally.)
- Breakout Session 2: Deeper journey Inward
 - What are obstacles to our engagement?
 - What are things that we have done as communities of color to each other that are not helpful? In other words, where have we been complicit in harming each other?
 - Talk about self-accountability as community & how to foster solidarity. The impact of indoctrination and assimilation—how we uphold that and how it can impact our Collaboration. (Critical piece)
- Documentation: Quinto Sol Documentation Model-First Sun (Journals, Archives, Symbol)

In the second month, February, the Collaborative members pondered how we each have been complicit to racism and to the various systems that are imposed on us, as well as on how we can heal. We broke into smaller groups of mixed ages. In one of these groups, we share the core themes that arose in the table below.

Summary of Complicity and Healing

	Complicity to Racism	Ways to Heal
Non-profits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Non-profit “rat race” ● Playing the political game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Change the game altogether ● Leverage resources ● Build something visionary
Youth Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Locking people up who don’t know how to deal with their emotions ● “kids in cages” ● Intergenerational trauma ● Discipline in education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth systems of positivity (not negativity) ● build a positive movement ● constant support, invest in our young folks and stick by them ● mutual respect ● youth voices ● the different generations together, to see us as equals ● youth are future ancestors
Personal behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● not slowed down, not taken the time, not been conscious in making decisions, about how to work against “the grain” ● When I experience good things, I think “I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● radical relatedness (coming together, connectivity, connect people) ● communication, bring the arts, move and create together ● being brotherly ● create a community ● let go of all of our divisions & separation



	<p>don't deserve it" or "I didn't earn it"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internalized ideas of race and class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● break the narrative and the cycle ● Love ● conversations ● courage and risk-taking ● Acknowledge trauma ● acknowledge that healing can take generations ● Community involvement
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During these sessions, we learned about ourselves and each other. We continued together on our journey inward to think about how we are complicit with systems of politics and historical racism and we began to identify obstacles to authentic collaboration. Language was also a topic of discussion. Some Collaborative members were unfamiliar with systemic words, acronyms, and terms. Responsibility was placed on the Collaborative to be conscious of language usage, to ask questions and to make efforts to collectively define and redefine key words in an effort to create an equitable foundation for knowledge building. While there is still a mountain of work to do, some steps were made to unpack meanings and methods of language usage as a way to speak back to power. While using accessible language was highlighted, there was also emphasis placed on learning how to dismantle the institutional expectations of hierarchical language knowledge, by learning and using systems language to challenge their power. For example, when the Collaborative was asked to examine our own complicitities with systems, the first step was in defining the word.

YOUTH PERSPECTIVE: COMPLICIT

“A little background on myself: I’ve been a systems impacted youth since I was born. From child protective services being called on us to family members being incarcerated as well as being on probation when I was 11. In February, during one of our meetings a question was asked using the word complicit. My first reactions were confusion as well as curiosity. Confused because I was unaware what the word meant and then curious as to why that language was being used with us, by us I mean youth. I asked, ‘What does that word mean?’ and if there’s another way we could go about the language being spoken. As someone who has been in various spaces like these for the past 5 years and not knowing what this word meant I knew I couldn’t be the only one having trouble, so after having a conversation with Albino and others in the group I was able to speak up and say my opinion on the topic. I asked, for future meetings, that there could be less language barriers and more transparency between youth and adults so we could have more success in our mission to have healing. And that’s exactly what has happened since then. The word complicit means to be involved with others in an illegal activity or wrong doing. The root of the word complicit is a Latin word which is *complicare* and that means to fold or twist together. This collaborative is about shifting the narrative, so from what I’ve gained from this and my conclusion is that I have taken a word used for criminalization and turned it into a word for cooperation. Complicit is a word I now understand because it was a word turned into an action we could see. And that action is the organizers in the collaborative have shown in their work that our words were listened to and heard and we are on the continuous path of healing as well as success within our community.”

-Xiuhtecuhtli Soto, La Plazita Institute



Mental Health and the Complicity of Psychology

There is a deep need to providing healing to our youth, but instead our health systems, just like other systems, are complicit to perpetuating harm. Youth who have [adverse childhood experiences](#) (ACES include experiencing violence, abuse or neglect, parental separation or divorce, parental incarceration, witnessing violence, growing up in a household with substance abuse or mental health problems) are more likely to have negative health, mental health, education and employment impacts. Juvenile offenders have higher prevalence rates of ACEs than youth in the general population with 97% of juvenile offenders in a Florida study reporting at least 1 ACE and 50% reporting four or more ACEs ([The Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences in the Lives of Juvenile Offenders](#)). A study of New Mexico juvenile offenders demonstrated that 86% of offenders had four or more ACEs ([Adverse Childhood Experiences in the New Mexico Juvenile Justice Population](#)). [In a recent report](#) on girls entering into juvenile detention, it was found that upwards of 80-90% of girls in juvenile detention facilities have prior histories of sexual abuse. Once confined, youth are more vulnerable to physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Almost 1 in 10 youth reported sexual abuse while incarcerated ([Annie E. Casey, 2015](#)). The lack of psychological safety and threat of abuse or actual abuse while in prison is likely to trigger past traumas which contributes to high rates of PTSD and depression ([Interrogating Justice](#)). In the New Mexico study, prior traumas appear to be related to high rates of youth substance abuse disorders in particular, along with PTSD and depression for juvenile offenders. The most prevalent ACEs experienced by NM juvenile offenders were: physical neglect (93%M; 100%F), parental separation or divorce (85%M; 90%F), and household substance abuse (81%M; 77%F).

The information on familial context and exposure to traumas prior to offending is important to keep in mind when considering Justice for Youth Collaborative members' concerns about the police and juvenile justice system serving as *de facto* parents when youth are taken into custody. Children who come from historically marginalized families and communities are already facing disparate impacts of dehumanizing governmental and societal policies and social practices reflective of White supremacist values. Their parents and their parents' parents going over generations have suffered intergenerational traumas through disease, death, violence, land, language and cultural loss. Families suffer historical and ongoing barriers to opportunities and resources, and thus may cope with the effects of colonization and racism through substance abuse and instability.

Children who have already experienced unstable parenting, neglect or abuse, and environments where substances are abused, are already likely to have atypical neurocognitive development that makes self-regulation challenging, along with mental health issues such as depression and PTSD that also impact behavioral reactions. Collaborative members shared that parents will sometimes call police as a last-resort parenting management technique for children who are acting out and where parents themselves have reached the limits of their own skills or resources to manage the behaviors. Rather than respond with understanding to the behaviors children use to express their shame, trauma, neglect and fear, police are trained to use force with resistance and mete out punishments.

If youth are detained or incarcerated, they experience a separation from primary parental figures (an ACE in and of itself) with correctional officers taking the place of the parent. A vivid example provided by a Collaborative member of the type of "parenting" that youth become exposed to from the moment they enter the justice system is the strip search that takes



place when being processed. A youth brought into the facility is required to get naked in front of strangers and is searched intimately for possible contraband. The youth who is already highly likely to have been exposed to abuse, neglect and trauma now moves into the hands of a state system that is given explicit permission to take over parenting through the use of punitive control tactics that are directly counter to positive social emotional development and, instead, increase exposure to trauma, re-traumatization and abuse.

Currently, the role of Western psychology in perpetuating and maintaining this system demonstrates its complicity. A recent document disseminated by the American Psychological Association outlines multiple areas in which psychology has promoted and perpetuated systemic racism across early childhood development, health care, education, science, work and employment opportunities, criminal and juvenile justice, and government and public policy (APA, 2021). Specifically as it pertains to children and the road to criminal justice systems, here are some key highlights of where psychology has failed:

- “Psychologists created and promoted the widespread application of psychological tests and instruments that have been used to disadvantage many communities of color (Fass, 1980; Helms, 2002; Kaestle, 2013; Kevles, 1968), contributing to the overdiagnosis, misdiagnosis, and lack of culturally appropriate diagnostic criteria to characterize the lived experience and mental health concerns of people of color (Anderson & Mayes, 2010; Cermele et al., 2001).”
- “Psychologists created, sustained, and promulgated ideas of human hierarchy through the construction, study, and interpretation of racial difference, and therefore contributed to the financial wealth gap and social class disparities experienced by many communities of color (Cummings Center, 2021).”
- “Psychological science and practice have been used by psychologists and others to support segregated and subpar education for many children of color (Jackson, 2005; Kazembe, 2021; Richards, 1997).”
- “Disparities in school discipline grow from racism of school staff as well as policing in schools and the influence of the norms of White sociocultural norms consequently impacting Black, Indigenous, and other students of color (Anyon et al., 2016; Sevon et al., 2021; Skiba et al., 2002)”
- “Discriminatory policies and practices (forms of institutional racism), the inappropriate application of psychometric tests and assessment instruments, and teacher biases have prevailed in the overrepresentation of children of color classified in: special education; identified with behavioral problems; subjected to suspensions, expulsions, and placements in alternative schools; and associated with low graduation rates (Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Fulks et al., 2020; Gilliam et al., 2016; Girvan et al., 2019; Losen & Martinez, 2013)”
- “Decades of psychological science have yielded incontrovertible evidence that negative criminal and juvenile justice outcomes for people of color are facilitated by (a) structural racism in the system that generates bias and discrimination (Muhammed, 2019); (b) institutional racism in policies and practices, including professional socialization into subcultures of social control and intolerance (Hall et al., 2016; Stoughton, 2015) and chronic situational conditions that are known to intensify bias (Pryor et al., 2020; Swencionis & Goff, 2017); and (c) interpersonal racism arising from stereotypes and attitudes among criminal and juvenile justice professionals, both explicit and implicit,



that dehumanize people of color and associate them with criminality and threat (Andretta et al., 2019; Eberhardt, 2019; Willis-Esqueda, 2020), all of which threatens the perceived legitimacy of criminal and juvenile justice actors and undermines the system as a whole (Trinkner & Goff, 2019; Tyler, 2017)”

Our children are the most precious beings of any community and across the human race. When we see that our youth coming from histories of marginalization may be struggling, and we follow the Western standards of care, whether it is prenatal care and parenting skills, teacher disciplinary practices, school policies regarding behavioral issues or substance use, or psychological assessments to identify placements, or referrals and sentencing decisions, or reliance on scientific studies for best practices, we can be assured that systemic racism and colonization is an intentional force that we must be willing to counteract. This does not mean that psychology and mental health specialists have no role, but that we call to the table those willing to hold their own professions accountable for their role in maintaining inequities in juvenile justice. All of us are susceptible to larger societal influences that pervade our social interactions and group decisions, whether professionally or personally. It provides a strong rationale to bring forth the voices of those directly impacted by current justice systems, and to uplift the generations of indigenous knowledge that our communities carry and that have proven over time to keep our communities resilient, thriving and connected.



Photo of child handcuffs, “used to take Indian kids to school”/ Burns Institute Presentation, Photo by Mary Pember



SECOND SUN

Acatl (Reed)

“Sense of Family”



Acatl, Codex Magliabechiano

Acatl, reed or bamboo, represents the plant nation and relationships at the core of our existence. Garcia explained that, “when we come out of the womb of mother earth we go to the second sun, we go into the world I call *familia*, family.” As the Collaborative entered the second Sun we began to think deeply about families, including surrogate family, extended family, chosen family and the Collaborative as an extended sense of family. The Toltec, Topiltzin Quetzalcóatl, was born on the day Ce Acatl, or 1 Reed.



Family

The Collaborative's first Sun allowed us to look at who we are as people, families, races of people, and ultimately the human race. In the second Sun, we begin to question our most essential relationships and understand how our communities may exude and share a sense of family with children, young people, and among ourselves. A family is expected to carry us, protect us and feed us. The collaborative began to think about how community may, ethically and responsibly, become a surrogate family and, "if family is broken, dysfunctional, a source of trauma and abuse then we become the surrogate family for them, and teach them what a functional family can look like and be," Garcia said, "Other orgs are already doing this for their communities too." During this phase, the Collaborative hosted National Thought Fellow, Jeanette Bocanegra, who is the national director of Justice for Families. She shared her story and perspectives on how families can learn to better navigate the complexities and complications of multiple systems together. During the April meeting, Collaborative members shared their own stories related to family experiences and offered solutions for a better way forward for systems-impacted families.

MEETING OVERVIEW: March 24th (2nd Sun- Sense of Family)

(ACATL- Plant Nation)

- National Impact on families
- Call to action to stop violence against Asian Communities -Sachi Watase (NM Asian Family Center)
- National Thought Fellow- Jeanette Bocanegra (Justice for Families , NY)
- Breakout Session:
 - Implications or impact of the justice system on you, your family, and/or someone you've served.
 - What are the cultural Implications on you, your family, and/or those you serve?
 - What do you think would have a positive impact on families?
 - How do we build a sense of family within the collaborative?



“So when we say, as a community, that we’re going to do this work, we have to really mean it. It takes passion, it takes patience, but our young people are depending on us.”

-Jeanette Bocanegra

National Thought Fellow, Jeanette Bocanegra, invested many years of her life advocating for families and children on the East Coast and nationally. She said that incarceration in her community is like a revolving door and acknowledges that there is still much more work to do. She interrogates political and legal systems in addition to the child welfare system about the generational pattern of removing children and forcing systems of incarceration and punishment based on legal frameworks that sometimes harm children. She argues that work needs to be done in multiple arenas to transform systems to truly serve their needs, “families are not aware of why policy and laws need to be changed even though we’re doing a lot of the solid groundwork supporting families, strengthening communities, but we have to work on transforming a lot of policies and laws that have been impacting us for generations,” she said. She also helps families to untangle complicated language so they can navigate systems by overcoming barriers strengthened by institutional language. She also began unraveling the school to prison pipeline by connecting the work she was doing with afterschool programs to the work she was doing with Justice for Families. She also began learning about diversion programs, “I’m grateful for the opportunity that I got to understand what a diversion program was and what we will need to do as a community but there was also something missing



- that parent involvement, that powering partnership, that parent engagement. In every role that I took to understand juvenile justice - no one spoke about the families.” She also continues to work with youth who are struggling to find place and purpose, “I want the rough ones I want the ones that people say, ‘I don't, I can't deal with that one’ cause that's the one that need us, the one that feels that he's not being heard that we don't see him that we don't see her that's the one that I know we want to make a difference in their lives . . . we gotta stand in different positions to be able to catch them no matter where they come from,” she said, “if they're ready to fall in the river we gotta pull them up; if they're falling in the River we gotta save them from getting drowned.”

Bocanegra also uplifted the positive aspects of extensions of family into the communities that surround us. She reflected on her experiences growing up, “the definition of family was community, that we looked out for each other, we love each other, we make each other cry - you know not everything is rosy.” She worked with families in the public school system and beyond to help them navigate the complicated paths to achieve justice for their children. If a young person needed extra resources she would make sure that those services were given to the family. “We talk about involving families, but when the voices of families are at the table and when families share concern they become penalized for what they say,” she said. Bocanegra knows first-hand about the potential negative consequences of reaching out for help to a system that criminalizes and punishes. She said that her son was having a hard time getting to school on time and when she asked for help in encouraging her son to be punctual, she found herself and her son in a courtroom before a judge who would determine if her son could even stay in her home. Then, over what Bocanegra calls, “a two dollar mistake,” her son was placed in a juvenile residential facility. She said,

“When the case was called in front of the judge, the lawyer comes to the District Attorney and said, "Your honor, this family has no control over their son. He's running reckless around the community, he may need to be placed. I looked at my husband and I said, ‘Did I say that?!’” and for the rest of my life I'm gonna always hear those words, those statements that I made are always gonna haunt me. I'm gonna say that my son was placed in one of the youth facilities. I got to experience all the nightmares that families talk about.”

Through her experiences, she learned that parents are often lost in a system that they don't understand and that drains essential resources from families that are often already struggling. The burden of a punitive system is carried by entire families and extended families, especially siblings of systems-involved youth.

“I also had my older children, a daughter who is a year older, who also felt that, because I focus on one, I neglected the other. So, I know that for families with more than 1, 2, 3 kids it becomes a challenge. I knew that families needed resources and support.”

Bocanegra also made a point about the value of young people's lives, which is often not recognized by the systems and societies that incarcerate them. She held up a dollar bill, then she crumpled it and said, “we could crumble it up, dip it in water put it in the soil, but if I open it after it's been through so much the value doesn't change. Our families and our young people's value don't change, it's still there . . . every moment, every time, every minute you invest it's worth it,” she said. Bocanegra's presentation moved collaborative members to think about impacts of punitive systems of incarceration on families in New Mexico. However, within these discussions, we saw the complications of youth who do not have a family that they can count on and how community organizations often fulfill the role of surrogate families.



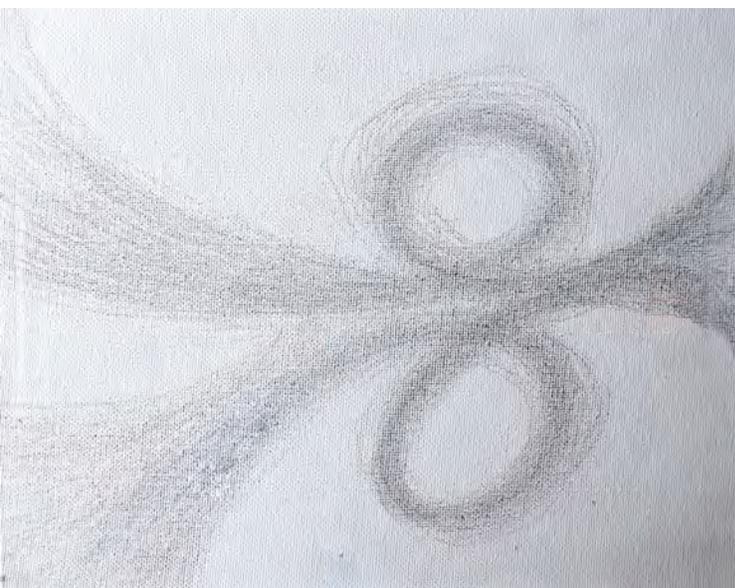
APRIL DOCUMENTATION TEAM WORKSHOP: Reflect & Create

What can the WIND teach us about justice for youth?

Collaborative members gathered on an especially windy day to reflect on how justice for youth can be achieved and to create art and poetry.

[Click here to view more photos and art created during this workshop](#)





“On a windy April morning at the Sanchez Farm I sat on the ground in front of a rock to shelter me from the wind as I drew it. Stroke after circle stroke, starting from one direction - how silly the wind doesn’t come from one direction, at least not for very long. It swirls, it explodes, it turns in on itself, forming circles of movement - multi-colored, picking up things on it’s way, creating pockets of circles in a storm, gathering us together and then propelling us back out into the world, vast and

strong. Others saw things in my drawing I did not see. Pablo saw the infinity sign and that spoke to me because - sometimes people see things in us that we don’t see in ourselves and that’s the beautiful thing about the Collaborative. I was initially nervous - then remembering that there is beauty in me, no longer hung up - creativity.”

-Tony Watkins, Families United for Education (FUE)



“Wind . . . teaches us how to adapt and how to protect ourselves. The world continues to shift as do we. Keep pushing along.” - Lisa Samudio



“I come from EARTH not poverty” - Tez, impacted family member



They shoot at us when we handcuffed
shoot at us with our hands up, why
we letting them toe tag us, my bro
just got 5 yrs. For lil baggies
that shit don't make no sense to
me, boys in blue been our enemy
honestly it kinda gets to me
I shouldn't fear those who posed
to be protecting me, like damn
that's jus how it is behind that
badge they cowardly w/o the
system they powerless, they put
A vest on & have a power trip
like bro, aint no need for that
they killin us cus we brown
a black, you killed a man
w hands behind his back say
say it was a mistake an
we're supposed to be fine w that



“They shoot at us when we handcuffed, shoot at us with our hands up why we letting them toe tag us my bro jus got 5 years for lil baggies that shit don’t make no sense to me boys in blue been our enemy honestly this shit gets to me cus I shouldn’t fear those who protecting me like damn that jus how it is behind a badge they cowardly without the system they powerless they put a vest on an have a power trip like bro ain’t no need for that they killin us cus we brown an black you killed a man w hands behind his back say it was a mistake an we posed to be fine with that?”

- **Xiuhtecutli Soto, La Plazita Institute, Youth Collaborative Member**



MEETING OVERVIEW: April 21st (2nd Sun- Expanding on Sense of Family)
(CIPACTLI- Crocodile Beginning of a Cycle)

- Local impact on families and collaborative members
- Local Panelist Speakers
 - Khadijah Bottom (Founder, Vizionz Sankofa)
 - Emani Brooks (Youth Representative, Keshet's NM Arts & Justice Network)
 - Eduardo Esquivel Gonzalez (NM Dream Team)
 - Wyatt Day & Mae Kluckman (Transgender Resource Center of NM)
 - Renne Chavez-Maes & Bella Chavez-Urban (Frontline Resurrection)
- Reflections:
 - Spoke of common themes heard, about the impact of system involvement on families.
 - What helps/heals?
- Documentation Team:
 - J4Y Collaborative Survey
 - Creative Journaling Entries
- Reflections:
 - Spoke of common themes heard, about the impact of system involvement on families.
 - What helps/heals?



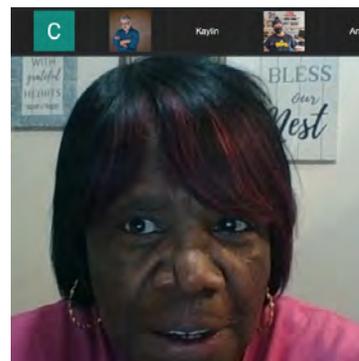
In the wake of [increasing verbal and physical assaults on individuals of Asian descent](#), and the most recent video footage of a Asian woman being assaulted after attending an anti-Asian hate crimes rally, the Collaborative spent time processing personal impacts and fears.

*It took me 45 years...
Almost half a century
(5 years shy)...
This is how long it took me,
my Black brothers and Asian sisters,
to finally hear your cry.
-Kee Straits*

LOCAL PANELISTS: Family Impacts

Khadijah Bottom (Founder, VIZIONZ-SANKOFA)

“I’ve always thought that the phrase, ‘We’re stronger together’ stands and this Collaborative exemplifies it,” Bottom said. She shared part of her life story. She was born in Hobbs, NM. At the age 12 she was confronted by a teacher with a paddle. She said, “whatever you think you are going to do with me with that paddle, I’m going to do to you” which resulted in her spending 18 months in the girls' school. Even in the early 1960s the number of black girls was disproportionate, she said. She later became an advocate when she realized she had a passion for taking the front line for people. She has advocated for women and families over the course of her life. “Don’t let the system dictate how you are to respond to a situation. There are resources and there is someone who can be sought out for help. Don’t just accept that they are the government and they have the final say. Don’t become judgmental and don’t become complacent. Let’s do something about it. Speak up, act up, do the right thing.”



Emani Brooks (Youth Representative, Keshet’s NM Arts & Justice Network)

Emani Brooks, talked about how personal and family complications get taken to school. She recalled that, even as a straight A student, member of the national honor society and member of the Black Student Union at her school, she risked being expelled due to one mistake. She related her experiences to the “school to prison pipeline” and larger systemic issues that criminalize and penalize young people in ways that can impact their futures in negative ways. “They didn’t take into account all of the good things I did . . . They labeled me as a trouble-maker. I just felt like they were trying to ruin my future,” she said. She identified the school policies and processes she was involved in, which did not recognize her humanity, her positive achievements, or the trauma that she carried with her, as something that can be corrected in the school to prison pipeline





by treating each case individually and making time and space to truly listen to each student's story. She said her main message is that we need to learn, as a whole, how to go about situations in a different way, being positive in our coping mechanisms, genuine in our intentions and being empathetic and sympathetic. She acknowledged that sometimes it's difficult to relate to others' situations, but that sometimes it is enough to, "know that they are hurting and want to be there for them." When asked about the multi-generational aspects of the Collaborative, she said, "It's all a learning process and it doesn't stop in any particular age group. You can teach me, as I can teach you."

Eduardo Esquivel Gonzalez (NM Dream Team)

Eduardo Esquivel immigrated from Chihuahua to Albuquerque with his parents at the age of 7. He is a critical race scholar, artist and activist. He shared his story of moving to the South Broadway/San Jose neighborhoods in Albuquerque after it became impossible for his family to live in Chihuahua. He recalls similarities in the constant police presence, harassment and seeing family members criminalized and incarcerated. He also experienced growing up at a time when, "You're being told that you, your family, and people like you are literally illegal . . . Your whole existence as a human being is deemed against the law. So that's always in your mind when your undocumented, that you're not supposed to be here, you're not supposed to be around, you're not supposed to exist." He talked about the self-hatred, anger and resentment he felt against himself, his situation and his culture. He entered the University, with a lot of pressure to hide his immigration status and to be successful. He was invited to an Undocu-healing retreat by the UNM Dream Team.

"Turns out that this was a group of a bunch of other immigrant and undocumented students who were talking with each other, sharing stories and then doing something about the situation they were in. I heard them say they were, 'Undocumented and unafraid.' On that weekend I never cried as much because I thought that I was alone and that I was doomed and from then on, I've been organizing because as immigrant youth we tend to lack our own spaces I was lucky to find out about these spaces in College, but once I got involved with the group, I realized that young people need this as soon as possible. They need a place to tell their stories to heal and to reclaim some of that power and agency and choice that has been taken away from us because of the system. So that's what we try to do working with immigrant youth and show them that they are not doomed or forever cursed."

Wyatt Day & Mae Kluckman (Transgender Resource Center of NM)

Wyatt Day shared about invisibility as a strategy. "I think about how well I've learned to be invisible in my queerness and my identity and in the intersections of that and when I think about justice and the effects it has had on my life and decisions I have made - that invisibility has both benefitted and harmed me." It takes years to change names and update identity records, Wyatt works with people to navigate that process. Day said only a small percentage of trans youth are, "able to be affirmed and be safe in their spaces through just being able to show an ID with a correct gender marker, and the name that they are referred to by." This can prevent people from going to school, getting jobs, locating safe places to live, and obtaining medical care. "I think about justice for myself and others I work with who have to prove themselves through legal court hearings where a judge will decide if they are themselves and I want that to end," Day said.



Renee Chavez-Maes & Bella Chavez-Urban (Frontline Resurrection)

Renee Chavez-Maes and Bella Chavez-Urban shared their experience as mother and daughter within the tangled web of incarceration. Renee spent more than 25 years of her life incarcerated with 11 commitments. Her daughter spent part of her term with her in the Woman’s Correctional Facility. Chavez-Maes founded Frontline Resurrection’s Women’s Life Recovery Home, which she established during Covid-19. She has been out of prison for two years and for the first time in her adult life, she is completely free from probation and parole. She grew up in Albuquerque’s International District, formerly known as “the war zone”. She was first arrested at 13 years old, did multiple 90-day terms at YDDC and was then committed to the girls’ school.

“When I look back at all of the times that I was incarcerated as a youth . . . I see plenty of opportunities where interventions could have been done on my mother, or maybe those are just hopes, dreams and prayers. When I think about the brokenness of me, you know, I loved her and I wanted her so bad, but she was so lost, so in her dysfunction. I got lost as well.”

“One day pregnant, I had a child growing. That was the game changer. So as a woman with no sense of belonging other than incarceration, when I got arrested on that day in 2007 and that baby began to grow and I was in my cell and that’s all I had - the echo of the cell and the baby as she stretched my belly. I’ll never forget, I just started making a deal with God, ‘if you’re real, I really want to be this baby’s mom’. I knew I could be a good mother, I knew I could do it.”



Wind scatters seed.....
My seed is my children.....
My children have been scattered...
When we incarcerate families... Seed grows in foreign gardens.. loosing its natural habitat...
3. Wind brings change... What do you hope will ^{my family's} Justice
Change in your life??.. My scattered family gathered...
What do you hope will change in ~~Community~~ Community?
Family Justice
By Renee Chavez-Maes

Renee gave birth to her baby while shackled. She and other women advocated for change and, as a result, she was one of the last women to give birth this way. In other ways she said she experienced elements of an “ideal pregnancy” while incarcerated. “I wasn’t exposed to drugs, I didn’t do the things that could have been, so she was protected in that. I was able to read to her



in the womb and nurture that bond. In prison, all you have is time and my focus was solely on the little girl that was developing inside of me as it changed the woman that carried her, because I was going through change, I didn't want to be in chains anymore. I really, really wanted to raise my little girl," she said. She got a college education and began developing programs for women inside and she began to see who she is as a leader in a positive way. She did one more term after confessing to her PO that she was slipping back into her addiction. "But the thing about this last incarceration is that I was in there with a vengeance, I was 007. See, I was already this future-focused woman that knew strategically what I was battling. I had a passion to fight addiction, I had a passion to motivate women, I had a passion to be a mother. So, I wasn't about to lay down that two years and eight months and not fight the system back in that way, so two years later here I am."

Bella is one of the youngest members of the Collaborative and she carries the story of being born into the system. Her story started when her mom gave birth to her while doing time, she overcame many of the complexities of her situation and thrived to become an advocate for youth justice. "It was hard seeing my mom incarcerated and not being able to go home with her," she said, "I started working through all this around 10, it took a while and around that time I started dancing. Often when I dance, it takes me away from my reality and it just helped me get through what I was going through." Bella said she was raised in a relative's home because both of her parents were incarcerated and spoke about the complications of sharing time. She said she did her best to surround herself with good people and great relationships while her mom was away. Mother and daughter are now reunited and working on strengthening their relationship. They are also growing through the work they do together with the Collaborative. "I'm glad that I get to be part of this Collaborative because I wouldn't want any other teenager or youth to go through what I had to, but it made me who I am," she said. Her words teach, guide, and remind of the purpose for Collaboration around justice for youth.

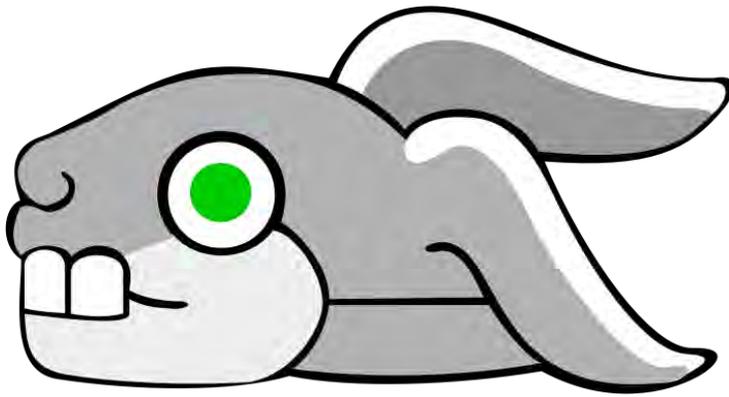




THIRD SUN

Tochtli (rabbit, animal kingdom)

“Community”



Tochtli, or rabbit, encourages us to think about multiplicity, procreation, and diversification. When we walk out of the front door of our house, we encounter different languages, cultures and ways of being. Our communities are made up of many families and many races. We become conscious of living beings and acknowledge the benefits and strengths of their diversity. “I’m talking about the creepy crawlers, winged ones, ones that swim, ones with fins, four legged - all the animal kingdom on this Earth. In this Sun we begin to form, multiply, and diversify,” Garcia said. Ecosystems are communities of diverse living things and the collaborative’s foundational framework aims to model this.



Tochtli represents strengths in numbers and reflects the benefits of joining together as a collaborative of individual organizations to address the juvenile justice system with collective issues and solutions. In community, there are varied families with different ways of understanding the world, which is also reflected in the diversity of approaches and philosophies held by individuals and organizations in the Collaborative. Garcia said he envisions the Collaborative as a “family of families” and a “Collaborative of collaboratives.” So in the third Sun, the collaborative began to look outside of our own networks and organizations to ask, “how do we identify with and relate to each other as a greater community?” The collaborative worked together to understand diverse ways of knowing, languages, norms, and customs of our communities and of the systems that impose upon us. We look at systems, not with the aim of assimilating, but with the aim of adapting to the diversity of our community and positioning ourselves in a location of power to communicate with the multiple systems that we engage with. With this step we also began to develop a collaborative narrative for youth justice by exploring our different lenses and approaches to community engagement and expanding reach by knowing what communities each organization is a part of.

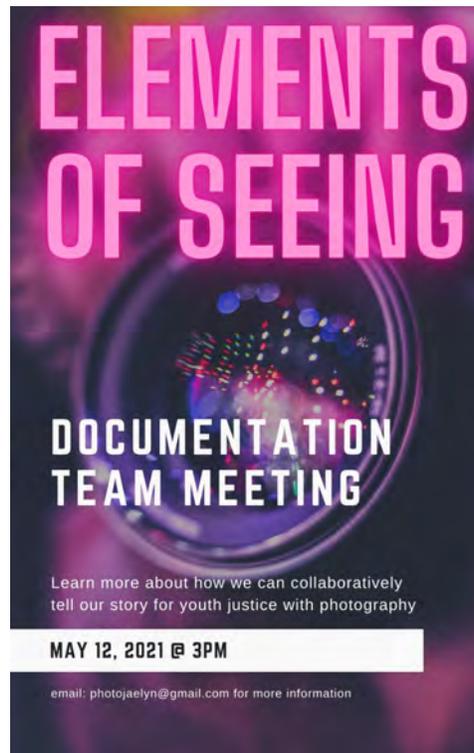
MEETING OVERVIEW: May 19th (3rd Sun- Justice in Community/Internal)

(ATL-Water)

- Presentation from the Documentation Team (early survey results)
 - Early Survey Results: Collaborative Demographics (age, race/ethnicity, length of residency, Future Vision)
- One on One Breakout:
 - When is the first time or a time that you felt part of a community?
- Breaking Down the stereotyping of communities:
 - Joe Garcia(La Plazita Institute) speaks on the effects stereotypes can have on a community and self.
 - Erik Rivera (La Plazita Institute) speaks on how we internalize the stereotyping of our community.
- Generational Breakout session:
 - How does the photo represent what community means to you? If you don't have a photo, what does community mean to you?
 - What does justice look like in your community?
 - Looking at the photo you chose, what are the stereotypes of your community? If you have no photo, name some of the stereotypes of your community?
- Multi-Generational Breakout Session:
 - How do we internalize the stereotypes that have been imposed?
 - How does community culture help overcome the imposed stereotype?



COMMUNITY LENS: PHOTOGRAPHY



“We as human beings are social by nature and we know intuitively that it takes a community . . . never has someone ever done anything alone, we gravitate towards each other and we gravitate to each other for solutions instead of being divided by all kinds of things that divide us and no solutions come about that way. Given that we as a community collaborative of diverse orgs and families offering many direct services and knowledge and wisdom and love, because we care, we’re doing this because we care and we aren’t doing this for any other reason than we care and we love and we want to see human potential lived as a gift.” - Joe Garcia

When collaborative members were asked to share photographs that show what community looks like to them, CBO representatives and youth mentors collaborated to bring forth a diverse collection of pictures of successes, challenges, and solutions. A few selections are featured on the next pages.

Click this [Link](#) to view all of the Collaborative Community photographs



Photos Courtesy of Evan Voth

Evan Voth shared images of community building actions with the Albuquerque Center for Hope and Recovery. Voth said, “We really wanted to represent community as so many people coming together from all different walks of life. What we do is work with people with mental health and substance use. We really show that no matter who you are and where you come from, you can have a seat at our table and we do that through food and just opening our doors and sharing whatever we have. So all these pictures are representative of us making sure that everyone has a seat at the table and everyone has what they need to nourish themselves and to live their lives.” In addition, he said, “for us, how it relates to justice is that when we build community with each other and they have these supports to fall back on and they know that no matter what they’re going through they have somewhere to go and that someone has their back to help them through it, we can really promote a stronger community so, hopefully we don’t need the justice system to intervene in what we can help resolve, and help educate and help support as a family and as a community.”



Photos

Courtesy of Wyatt Day

“This place can be home. It’s often where we eat, where we get ready, where a lot of gossip happens, where we should need some concerns, solve problems. We mourn here that wall you see is our Memorial wall. For all those we lose to a variety of violence is and injustices that happen. We dance and create. And I think that’s where we make family for a lot of us, especially for a lot of the people who come here every single day. The families that maybe they were raised in or come from, no longer speak with them or interact with them, or are a large portion of their trauma. And so I think what justice is in this space and like for our community is. I’ve been using the phrase, “to see and be seen.” And we don’t question. Not all of our people who come in each day are able to present and be fully themselves but in that building they can be as much of them as they want to be. “I don’t ever question somebody’s gender, they’re not here to meet a standard or a checklist. In order to be trans enough. Everybody is respected upon entry, you don’t have to know yourself well enough to be welcomed. You just are. Often our people are seen as sex workers and substance users and it doesn’t matter whether they are or not, it matters that they are so much deeper than that, they have complex lives and identities and experiences.”

- Wyatt Day, Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico



Photos Courtesy Mañpiya Black Elk and Anthony Shemayme



“When I think about this - this idea of ‘village’ and raising our children right and really guiding them and being there and nurturing them and learning together and standing shoulder to shoulder with them. You know, to close the achievement gap of graduation, but also really thinking about how we are learning to be healthier male identifying people in our community and how we can really think about what it means for us to have a healthy masculinity. I think there’s a lot of that in this photo here, there’s learning and teaching happening at the same time. These are beautiful young men in our community who are there to serve in many ways, not just with labor and strong work, but with loving, caring, in the act of seeing and opening blessing, certainly. We think about how in schools we just funnel these young men, we label them with ‘they’re bad,’ ‘they’re up to no good’ or this or that, or whatever. And you

know how quickly we are to let them be suspended and not let them do activities like this. There’s different stereotypes there that we’ve tried to break and challenge.” - **Mañpiya Black Elk**



Photos Courtesy Khadijah Bottom

“My pictures depict people experiencing homelessness. This one was really something because that day my daughter and I were out taking food around. And as we was about to drive out this gentleman says, ‘Just a minute, there are some women here too.’ So I’m looking all around and I’m like, ‘Where?’ he says, ‘In there.’ So that’s me peepin’ up under there to see the women. It was cold that day, ice on the ground that day. That’s the international district. You’re going to see this pretty much every street you travel. And so I sent these pictures to instill in one’s mind that. Yeah, we have you know some positive things going on in my community. But the one that speaks the loudest is the people experiencing homelessness. Where is the justice for them? I would have to say there’s no justice. There’s there, there’s no justice. How can you visualize this on a daily basis and don’t feel like there’s something we should do for mankind? I don’t give a damn if they were alcoholics, drug addicts, they steal. We know that everybody don’t want to continue living like that.” - **Khadijah Bottom, VIZIONZ-SANKOFA**



“This is from an event we do around the holidays each year. And it’s open to everyone who’s part of the NMCAN community, so young folks and their families, volunteers, partners. I chose it because . . . they were having fun. I think that’s important, there should be joy in this work we do. There are definitely very serious real sides of it, but I think, if there’s not fun and community, it’s not going to

go right. And so for me, not only does this picture represent the fun that we have in community, but also that inclusion and the idea of just putting the resources towards families. It’s what this collaborative is going to spend an incredible amount of energy working together to try and get for community.” - **Kira Luna, NMCAN**



Portraits by Lonnie J. Anderson



Shoshawna Jim and Kira Luna, NMCAN



Photos Courtesy Renee Chavez-Maes



“So, you know, some of our women have never sat down around a table, they come from broken backgrounds and broken childhoods, like myself, and so some of those in this picture, they're sober from alcohol and there's some that have been released from prison, some that have graduated other programs but need a stable place to grow. So, right now we're just restoring lives a little bit at a time.”

- Renee Chavez-Maes, Frontline Resurrection

YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

Destiny's Block

by Destiny Sisneros



What does your block
consist of?

I have about 300 people
in mine.

Is your block in a
complex?

In my complex children
hide.

What's a big dream of
yours? Contrast yours
with mine.

It should be okay to trust
the ones you live with.
The ones I live with are
just fine.

If I was a mother I'd be
terrified,
To see my children afraid.



WORKSHOP



Photo by Jaelyn deMaria

“The collaborative is welcoming our System Impacted Youth to our **LEVEL UP: STEP IN TO STEP OUT** Workshop presented by system impacted partner, **MonTeil Williams**. “As advocates for justice, we see a bright future in working with our younger generations. We encourage you all to dream big and be the change you want to see in your communities. This workshop will be a guide and prepare you to present your authentic views, ideas, and experiences.”



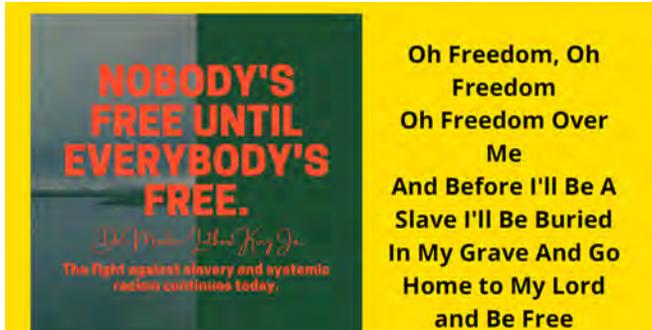
MEETING OVERVIEW: June 16th (3rd Sun- Community/ National Perspective) (OLLIN- Movement)

- Cathryn McGill (NM Black Leadership Council) Does presentation on Juneteenth
- National Guests:
 - Tarsha Jackson (We Are Not Alone, Texas)
 - Frances Valdez
 - Questions they focused on:
 - How has system impacted the youth in your community?
 - What has helped your community overcome some of the effects of systems?
- Youth Forum:
 - John Hoang (NM Asian Family Center)
 - Teresa Garcia (Serenity Mesa)
 - Mikayla Trujillo (ABQ Center for Hope and Recovery)
 - Baruch Campos (Together for Brothers)
 - Questions they focused on:
 - Why are you invested in participating in the collaborative?
 - From your experience what is your dream for justice for youth for you and your community in 3 to 5 years? DREAM BIG! Hopes and ideas
- Question:
 - What impacted you most from the youth forum?





JUNETEENTH



Cathryn McGill from the New Mexico Black Leadership Council shared her freedom story by providing context and history related to family, justice, and Juneteenth. She talked about the legacy of her mother and grandmother and how her history and their histories intertwine with national experiences of slavery and racism in the United States. McGill shared teachings about freedom and about how it

took two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed to notify enslaved people about their status as free people. However, McGill reminded those in attendance that slavery never really ended, it changed form, in an evolutionary process that is reflected in the current state and national justice systems. While people have been celebrating for over a century, Juneteenth officially became a U.S. holiday on June 17, 2021, the day after McGill shared her words with the Collaborative.

MY FREEDOM STORY

Willie Mae Brackeen, Grandma & Me



NATIONAL SPEAKERS



“It wasn’t until my son got involved that I started paying attention to, not just issues within the juvenile justice system, but the issues that impact our communities in regard to jobs, affordable housing and infrastructure. . . it didn’t just happen to me it was happening for kids across the state of Texas . . . As a mother and a sister and a woman who grew up in a family that was close knit, we were raised to take care of our kids.” - **Tarsha Jackson (We Are Not Alone, Texas)**



“My grandmother lived through discriminations, aggressions, all forms of racism and misogyny. And I think about her. I've been spending more time here because I think I've been wanting to reconnect to her. She actually died in February, during the winter storm in Texas, and I think about her death in relationship to all the things that we're fighting for and the reality is that I think about my grandmother dying during this freeze. . . there are so many people I know like her, who because of illness or different issues, the condition of living below freezing temperatures in your own home for multiple days. They were not able to survive and I am very angry. The people are literally living through the same thing right now. I'm angry at the people who run these systems and White supremacy, that has literally been trying to kill us, since the beginning. But what I've been thinking a lot about lately is more how my grandmother lives, as opposed to how she died. And the fact that she lived and that she survived them trying to kill her since the day she was born. And she survived segregation, and she survived violence on the border, and Texas Rangers, and all the things that have been killing our people . . . she survived and she had children and grandchildren, and she left her mark.” - **Frances Valdez**



YOUTH FORUM

Questions they focused on:

- Why are you invested in participating in the collaborative?
- From your experience what is your dream for justice for youth for you and your community in 3 to 5 years? DREAM BIG! Hopes and ideas

John Hoang (NM Asian Family Center)



our voices mesmerize on community building, knowledge gathering, and resource sharing
like libraries, a place for genuine collective good
for many lost ones to plant themselves to thrive in the soil below
in our safe haven, for storytelling sessions and learning opportunities galore
remaking Justice to bring an abundance of goodness locally

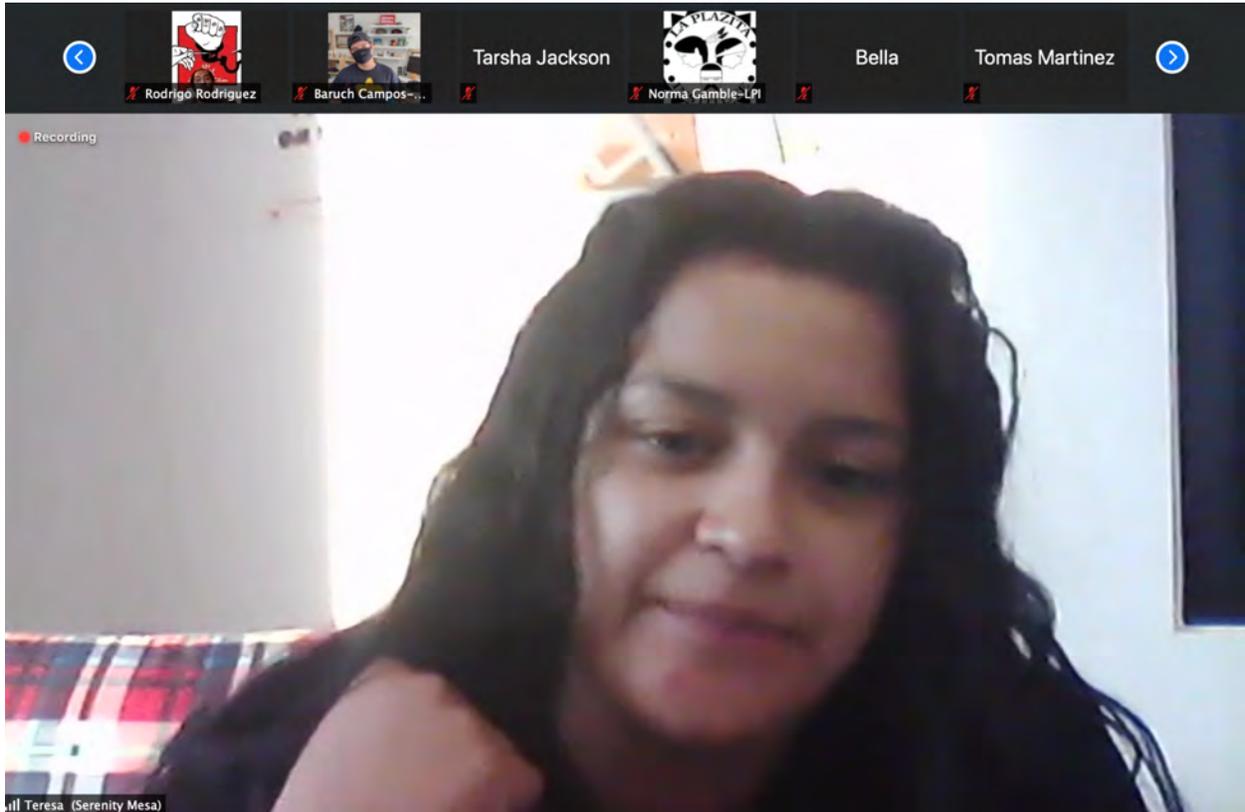
this is just a description of our love that asks for accuracy in accountability
transformative & material change that is infused with the joy of loving
it's not our little secret, it's what is expected to be universal for peace and Justice

we want Justice that isn't afraid to confront the truth
we need it to be brave like the rest of us because of the atrocities that affected us deeply
millions of stories, but we could only get to know a fraction because that's what injustice does

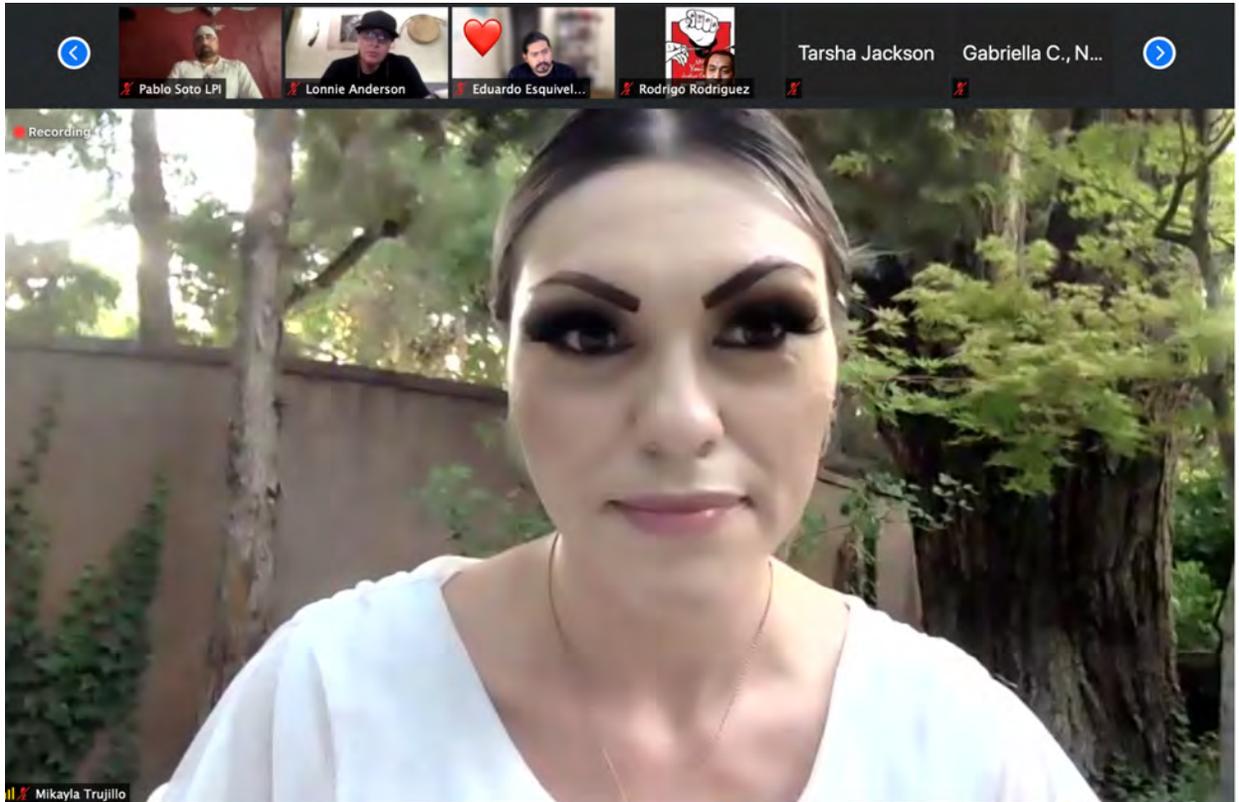
it would be remiss of us to not honor those who paved the way for us to move forward
but in actuality, Justice has always been the gate we've been trying to access
because of its dual ability to open doors for us

personify Justice to speak truth to power
unafraid to call out power being wielded unfairly
to stop kindly requesting fairness from state-sponsored systems and institutions that keep us down





“My dream is for justice for you, for it to be known. My hope is to be heard and seen and change. My hope is to help those who didn't think they can be helped.” - Teresa Garcia, Frontline Resurrection



“So for me, the dream for this collaboration is to break that generational cycle of incarceration. Right now, the weight for my family falls on two beautiful little girls, 8 and 10 years old, to break this generational cycle of incarceration. Generational cycles can be positive or negative. So, all the strength that we present together to end this generational cycle of incarceration, to teach them better, to teach them skills, to show them a positive role model. I know that if my family would have taught me how to be hard working, job seeking, and have healthy mental health, I would have wanted to be that. My hope and dream for three to five years of this community collaboration is to start breaking that cycle, whether that's daughters to mothers, sisters or brothers . . . that maybe even though we have been incarcerated, we have grown up, and we have learned all these virtues that it takes to be living a productive life.”

- Mikayla Trujillo, ABQ Center for Hope and Recovery



“Living in a world where we could just ease our communities’ anxiety, sadness and fears. I feel like that’s the place I want to be. So my hope is that within this team, or within this collaborative, we make a real push to our decision makers to really begin thinking about the justice system as more than what it currently is, especially for our youth to push real meaningful solutions, not those fake solutions. Provide young people with skills, tools, and support to thrive, with their community instead of locking them away and further endangering young people’s physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.”

- **Baruch Campos-Gallardo, Together 4 Brothers**



GLOBAL CIRCLE

“Tlatocan”



A *tlatocan* is a council and a gathering of nobility. In July, the Collaborative paused to invite others into the circle. National and international colleagues in the movement for justice for youth convened to learn more about the Albuquerque Justice for Youth Community Collaborative. Members presented about each previous meeting and an interactive timeline was presented to illustrate a larger context for understanding justice. Space was provided to reflect and celebrate growth and the learning we accomplished as a collaborative up to this point.



SAVE THE DATE!

WEDNESDAY JULY 21, 2021
5:30PM-8:30PM MT
VIA ZOOM

Hosted by La Plazita Institute

Albuquerque Justice for Youth Community Collaborative

Invites you to:

**AN OPEN GATHERING
FOR THE MONTH OF JULY
"TLATOCAN"**

OUR MISSION

Funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Collaborative is comprised of community-based stakeholders—local grassroots organizations, youth justice advocates, and young people and families who have been directly impacted by the juvenile justice system. Its aim is to: honor and strengthen community self-determination; reduce (and eventually eliminate) dependence on the juvenile justice system; and keep youth safe at home and supported by the capable hands of their own communities. We come together to build a collective partnership and work toward a new, community-defined vision of youth justice for generations to come.

- JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF SHARING AND REFLECTING ABOUT THE PAST SIX MONTHS OF COLLABORATIVE WORK DIRECTLY FROM SYSTEM IMPACTED YOUTH, FAMILY MEMBERS, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS
- LISTEN AND LEARN WHILE COLLABORATIVE MEMBERS OPENLY SHARE STRATEGIES, CHALLENGES, WISHES, HOPES, AND DREAMS ON JUSTICE FOR YOUTH.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ALBINO GARCIA AT ALBINOGARCIAJR@GMAIL.COM

**SPANISH TRANSLATION SERVICES WILL BE AVAILABLE*



MEETING OVERVIEW: July 21st

(MALINALLI- Tlatocan-Global Circle)

- Self Check: Where we are
- Mid-year Review
- External Friendships



AFFIRMATION

I believe in living.
I believe in the spectrum
of Beta days and Gamma people.
I believe in sunshine.
In windmills and waterfalls,
tricycles and rocking chairs.
And i believe that seeds grow into sprouts.
And sprouts grow into trees.
I believe in the magic of the hands.
And in the wisdom of the eyes.
I believe in rain and tears.
And in the blood of infinity.

I believe in life.
And i have seen the death parade
march through the torso of the earth,
sculpting mud bodies in its path.
I have seen the destruction of the daylight,
and seen bloodthirsty maggots
prayed to and saluted.

I have seen the kind become the blind
and the blind become the bind
in one easy lesson.
I have walked on cut glass.
I have eaten crow and blunder bread
and breathed the stench of indifference.

I have been locked by the lawless:
Handcuffed by the haters.
Gagged by the greedy.
And, if i know any thing at all,
it's that a wall is just a wall
and nothing more at all.
It can be broken down.

I believe in living.
I believe in birth.
I believe in the sweat of love
and in the fire of truth.

And i believe that a lost ship,
steered by tired, seasick sailors,
can still be guided home
to port.



**Rodrigo Rodriguez
(SWOP) shared a poem
by Assata Shakur to
start the meeting**

I



Justice 4 Youth Interactive Timeline

[Click here to interact with timeline](#)

The collaborative moved fast and went deep to understand ourselves and the roots of practices and experiences that have resulted in youth being incarcerated in New Mexico. The roots of family and personal experiences tie us to the systems of incarceration and liberation. As part of the process of journeying inward, collaborative members contributed to an [online interactive timeline](#). Using the Nahui Ollin symbol of movement as a backdrop, it reflects points in history that have both moved toward a youth-based prison culture and also moved toward freedom from those cycles at the same time. It is a collaborative work-in-progress, meaning that we all still have the opportunity to add points to inform this history. At this point, the Collaborative used it to reflect internally on this time that we've spent together and share a glimpse of this history with our larger community.

The timeline inspires us to think about the times before colonization and about how young people were viewed and treated within indigenous systems of raising children and understanding justice. We've talked about the multiple invasions by foreign governments and philosophies that continue to directly influence and impact how justice is imposed and experienced within our landscapes. By looking at the points on the timeline, we can think about the 530 years that have passed since Columbus arrived or the 424 years we've endured Oñate's legacy of imprisoning, torturing, starving, and enslaving our ancestors, which also began a system of colonial land ownership that would result in the militarized, national borders that exist within our homelands today and make us illegal here. We also acknowledge the points in history that resisted those systems, including the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Then moving ahead on the timeline, we also see that before New Mexico became a state in 1912, boarding schools for Native Children had already been established to literally kill the Indianness within us, the State Penitentiary was built and accepting prisoners, and the first juvenile court was established in the New Mexico territory, under U.S. occupation.



We see that before New Mexico entered the union in 1912, a system was already in place to assimilate and punish any resisters to that assimilation. We also thought about wars, national political histories and about how they influence our current situation related to justice for youth. We also see how local histories, including the riot at the state pen, which at least one member of the collaborative experienced first-hand after first entering the system as a youth. These additions allowed conversations about what has happened here in this landscape and the violent legacy that is given to the youth by carrying this historical trauma forward.

And then as we expand the timeline to get a closer look at more recent history. We can think about all of these points that brought us together to form the Collaborative, through



months of preplanning to convene the first meeting on January 21, 2021. We also have to keep in mind that all of this happened ***during a global pandemic**, and ***on Inauguration day**, with the threat of a second insurrection taking place on that very day. The Collaborative, made up of 24 community based organizations, paired with systems impacted youth as mentors, showed up on that day.



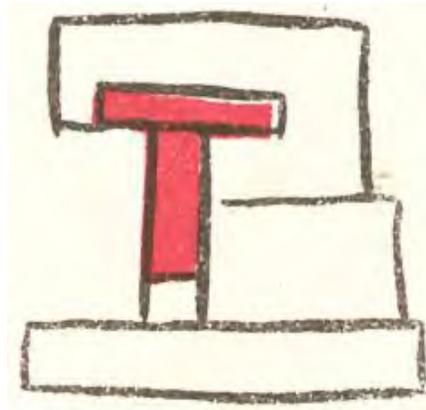
With this timeline, we are also able to think about the future and envision what will be next. As we look into the future, we see a tremendous amount of work to be done, but we also see that identifying solutions and possibly achieving true systems change may just be possible through collaboration. It's also important to note that there are many layers that are not visible in this timeline, including all of the pivots the collaborative has made to respond to some of the events that happen within our local, national and global context. It also does not show the micro collaborations that have been happening between organizations in the collaborative.



FOURTH SUN

Calli (house)

“Institutions”



Calli, Codex Magliabechiano

Calli, or house, represents what five-fingered beings (humans) create, including structures, spaces and places. Calli connects us like air, water, fire, earth - each of these things are dependent upon each other. Understanding the concept of Calli helps to build capacity by being holistic and comprehensive. This Sun is where we begin to interface with a global society. “It can be oppressive and overindulged,” according to Garcia who relates this sun to modern institutions like jails, prisons, schools, hospitals, and governments.

Nahuatl Language Roots

Calpulli - community house

Calmecca - institutions of learning

Temaz**calli** - house of healing

Zocalo - House of commerce, economy



As the Collaborative journeyed to the fourth Sun, focus was placed on the values and virtues of “juvenile justice” in contemporary society, which are defined in other-than-indigenous frameworks and histories. “When you are suppressed, oppressed, apprehended and incarcerated you become institutionalized and you don’t have capacity to have a connection to a reinforced sense of family, community, a connection to self - you begin to identify strictly to the institutions and interpretations of who you are,” Garcia said, “This is the four suns, the *quarto sol*. This is where we have conceded to the framers of institutions that this is the way it should be within a capitalist framework. We have conceded our authority for too long.”

August 18th (4th Sun - Systems)

(XOCHITL- A fully-bloomed flower, the energy of maturity)

In August, the Collaborative paused to honor the life of Bennie Hargrove, a 13-year-old young man who was shot and killed by another 13-year old at Washington Middle School in Albuquerque on August 13, 2021. The shooting happened on the third day of the new school year, during the lunch period. News reports stated that Hargrove stepped-up to defend another student who was being bullied when he was shot and killed. Another teen, also 13, was arrested and charged with an open count of murder and unlawfully carrying a deadly weapon on school premises. The Collaborative pondered the tragic loss of life, discussed prevention methods, and asked the difficult question of how the Community could and should respond. Further, if institutional youth detention was eliminated, is the community able and capable of addressing heinous crimes such as these? If youth detention centers like (YDDC) were eliminated, where would kids who kill other kids go? How should Hargrove’s mother be comforted when she screams for justice? There is an urgency in the work we are doing together, but aiming for justice for *all* youth is a complex goal.

The symbol for the day the Collaborative met was *Xochitl*, a fully formed flower that has gone through all of the stages of transformation, from bud to maturity. We mourned the impossibility of Bennie Hargrove’s full bloom into his adult life.



Xochitl, Codex Magliabechiano



September 15th (4th Sun- Systems)

(TOCHTLI- Community, Multiplicity)



James Bell, Founder and President of the Haywood Burns Institute shared his wisdom and experience with Collaborative members during the September meeting. He spoke about White supremacy, culture, and structural racism in relation to a discussion about systems of power and control. Bell also shared the Burns Institute's model to advance well-being, which is a process that may take many generations to achieve. The structural well-being framework engages through a values-driven process using qualitative and quantitative data aimed at deconstructing structural racism, while re-imagining a system that promotes well-being. The approach includes:

- Anchoring the work by building trust, working agreements and shared values
- Building awareness of structural racism, including historical competence, shared language and self-reflection
- Establishing a cross-system collaborative
- Centering Community, especially impacted communities
- Power sharing and transparency
- Cross Sector Data, including data points and points of intersection AND stories

Bell shared his philosophies on how change happens. He described the ineffectiveness of changing one subsystem at a time given the interlocking nature of subsystems. The most impactful change is to go for change in all parts of the ecosystem, he argued. Additionally, he pointed out that systems have goals, but rarely have values, or their values are implicit and centered on White supremacy. Transformation occurs when values are explicit and counter to



White supremacy. Furthermore, change occurs only when we move beyond defining the problem and jumping to solutions and into making relationships and creating shared understanding first. Relationships are central to change because it is the people within the community who will make change happen. Finally, Bell clarified that systems are all designed to uphold power. Our attempts to fix the current systems are equivalent to “harm-reduction”, but if we want to heal, he suggested that we take our focus off of reforming and onto dismantling the current systems.



Gone/Transformed

- *What is Gone?*
- *Why is the policy Gone?*
- *What is New or Transformed in its place?*
- *What are the impacts on the workforce to the particular function?*
- *Who will assume the new or transformed functions?*
- *Where will the function live?*
- *How will agencies/community need to work cross-sector to apply the new design component?*
- *What aspects of the current budgeting/funding structure need to change in order to apply the new design?*
- *Obstacles or challenges to having the particular policy or function Gone?*
- *Is new local/state/federal legislation needed?*



Bell also uplifts community work that centers community agency and moves beyond community engagement to authentic power sharing and decision making by believing that those closest to the issue have the solutions. The model relies on community experts and directly-impacted experts equitably for an experience that goes beyond community engagement to focus on realizing community-centered decision making. Bell also highlighted the great responsibility held in this type of work and advised the Collaborative to be prepared for a long-distance struggle that will include envisioning what will replace the current system and how the community can support and advance a new way forward.



Recording

CENTERING COMMUNITY

BEYOND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
POWER SHARING + DECISION MAKING
TRANSPARENCY
BELIEVING THAT THOSE CLOSEST TO THE ISSUE HAVE THE SOLUTION

FUNDERS

YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

“James Bell first showed ethnic population predictions demographics in rural areas for the near future. The data showed people of color will start becoming the majority. James Bell explained even with this population change, white people are going to use the justice system to keep power. The justice system is a way to use structural racism to oppress people of color. It has been normalized and legitimized in the culture. Bell also said we cannot have reformed policies when those policies, at their core, are used to oppress people. He also explained reform is hard too, because bureaucracy and infrastructure take all the money. James Bell told the collaboration about American exceptionalism. That America has no faults and everybody wants to move there. This pushes white supremacy culture and normalizes it. After that, he told us the methods he used to bring change. They have to have equity and have community-centered solutions. The system also has a flexible government. They must have a harm-reduction framework. Bell said that they must deconstruct the system. One way is how departments are funded. This causes fighting within the departments. The departments have to be more flexible in how they run. You must make safety ecosystems. This is not focusing on one part of the system, but changing all areas like Law enforcement, courts, probation, procedures, and so on. The system needs to be centered by the community. If higher up people want to make change they have to be willing to give up their power to others.”

-Chris Wall, Documentation Team

FIFTH SUN

Nahui Ollin (Movement)

“Solutions”



Nahui Ollin, Codex Magliabechiano

“When there is no more resistance, there is no life” - *Albino Garcia*

At the center of this model is nahui ollin, or movement from four directions. Resistance also resides there. It is the balance of opposites, where there is natural tension. It is the *battalia sagrada*, the sacred battle, between elements. Resistance is movement. Which brings the Collaborative full-circle, through movement, to the beginning and the first Sun, Tecpatl, the flint knife that creates a spark through resistance. Nahui Ollin is both the earthquake and the balance through movement.



The role of the *Quinto Sol* model is to give Collaborative members the capacity to transition between worlds, represented by the five Suns. It is the culmination of and the capacity to have a strong sense of self and family, and capacity to navigate this global institutional world - if we can then we have movement.

“We have to transcend this and make it our system because we are historically and scientifically people of systems, we are made up of systems, astrological, earth, matter, science - we are a system of systems. We need to embrace that.” - Albino Garcia

The current system has great strength in owning the juvenile justice system narrative. The Collaborative has different and varied interpretations of what justice for youth looks like. “We must take time to identify it and define it and to create some balance and some movement - because right now there is no movement, the only movement is others defining and treating our children based on what they define as justice - ¿sabes que? That’s not how we do justice.” An inside-out model has been proposed by some Collaborative members, urging an approach that would uplift strengths in CBOs and shift funding to organizations already vetted by communities that are working inside communities to address community needs, root causes of problems, and alternatives to incarceration.

October 20th (5th Sun- Sacred Strategy of Engagement)

(CALLI- houses of justice and injustice)



Children Youth and Families Department (CYFD) Secretary Barbara Vigil was hosted by the Collaborative on October 20, 2021. The visit was initiated by Collaborative member Bette Fleishman when she mentioned the Collaborative’s work to the newly appointed Secretary, who showed interest. Fleishman contacted Garcia, who consulted with several Collaborative members about the opportunity. The Collaborative moved forward, offered the invitation to Vigil and began to organize. Xiuy Soto led youth members of the Collaborative in developing questions to ask the Secretary. Youth met in-person and on Zoom two times, for two hours to prepare.



During the meeting with Vigil, Emani Brooks asked, “Do you believe in juvenile incarceration and do you believe in the system as it works today?” Secretary Vigil responded, “No and No! I believe in giving young people the opportunity to right their wrongs, but not through the type of punishment that we have of incarceration.” While the specific definition of what she considers “incarceration” was not clarified, the Secretary was clear that she does not support current policies for youth imprisonment.



Vigil has New Mexico Roots. The secretary was born, raised and educated in New Mexico. She attended Saint Catherine’s Boarding School after her mother passed away and her father was left to raise the children. Inspired by her life experiences, she became a community and civil rights lawyer to advocate for communities, families, and children in New Mexico and eventually she advanced to serve as the chief justice for the New Mexico Supreme Court. After her retirement from the court, she was selected to lead the heavily criticized CYFD department after CYFD Secretary Brian Blalock stepped down amid controversy. While she acknowledged some of the problems she inherited, she was also hopeful about making changes that benefit children in New Mexico.

Principles Vigil said she stands by:

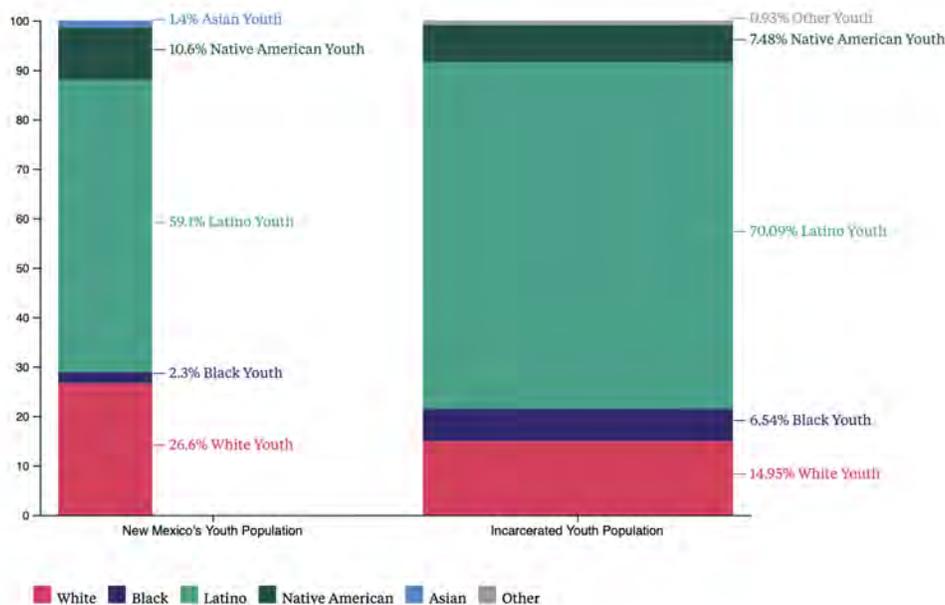
- 1) Transparency
- 2) Collaboration
- 3) Accountability



Systemic Racism

When Collaborative members pushed Secretary Vigil on issues of inequity related to race and class, the Secretary said, “If there is **systemic racism** or ways of dealing with minority children in our system, then I can address that and I would say ‘yes,’ we need to look at what happened in those cases, how did it happen and can we reduce adverse impact based on race of that outcome.” Khadijah Bottom asked if the Secretary would be open to, “looking into the reunification of some of the Black kids that were taken from CYFD and their families who were denied being able to get them back?” Bottom noted that community action has tried to establish a conduit and got nowhere and said she is concerned about processes that disconnect and dislocate parents and children who become systems-involved and lose contact because the system terminates their rights. “There is also a disproportionate number of African/Black youth who end up in foster care without opportunities for unification. Looking at the data will show the racial disparities in how families are treated based on the color of their skin. There is a group of African/Black families who are organizing about this and we have previously met with the Deputy Secretary of CYFD and very little help was provided,” Moneka Stevens added. Secretary Vigil responded by saying, “Going forward, when we look at the disproportionality of the system on minority kids, we need to examine how the system is unfair based on race.” Bottom pressed further to get a response about Black children in New Mexico specifically, she said, “We know that your system has proved to not be kind to Black kids.” Finally, Secretary Vigil responded to the specific question by saying, “We need to examine how the system has treated Black children and make sure that we are addressing that system and minimizing that adverse impact on them and how we are treating them.”

In New Mexico African American youth are 6x more likely than white youth to be incarcerated.



Youth First: <https://www.nokidsinprison.org/explore/new-mexico/?section=race-interactive>



Overall, Garcia pointed out that, “The state has reduced the number of beds in juvenile lock-ups, but has not reduced the disproportionality of race, kids of color are still the highest number.” Vigil was the chair of the **Disproportionate Minority Contact Blue Ribbon Task Force** as a district judge – looking at various decision points in the system. She said the task force didn’t have resources to work on each decision point at the time, so the task force focused on the “front and back end.”

Front end: focus on arrest, more community policing, educate officers on their innate bias against youth of color

Back end: When a youth is committed to incarceration – is there implicit bias on the part of judges?

The Secretary promises to continue this work in her current position. She promises to look at innerworkings of CYFD, then start to implement practices that would impact those numbers. While the Secretary acknowledged that, “Time is needed to analyze how the department might be restructured,” she said she would be happy to come back to share ideas and vision at a later date. In addition, Secretary Vigil said she supports ICWA, also looking at the impact of the system on Native American Children and Families and to keep children connected to their Indigenous community. The Collaborative further discussed the limits of ICWA for addressing disruption of families and cultures in other communities as well. Christopher Ramirez pointed out that his organization, *Together for Brothers*, was cut off from a youth partner when they were placed in the foster care system even though when the youth was temporarily in a shelter, they were able to maintain connection and deemed an important part of the youth’s core support network.

*The Collaborative discussed the advantages of recording Vigil’s promises as a method of accountability.

Child Protective Services (CPS)

Mae Kluckman asked an important question related to Child Protective Services (CPS). She said it is common for CPS to come in, have a look around, decide nothing is going on and leave, which may, “cause more harm than good, because they are not able to spot signs of abuse.” Secretary Vigil responded by saying that she plans to look into how more resources can be provided to families in this situation. Henry Douglas asked if Vigil had any thoughts on doing some kind of drug and alcohol prevention, specifically in middle school. Vigil responded by saying, “Yes, we are looking into how we can shift more of the budget to the front end.” She plans to save money by working on prevention as the department builds out the behavioral health model in New Mexico by intervening earlier with resources to strengthen families. When asked, “How can we as parents, youth and community work in collaboration with you and the agency to be instrumental in reducing and eliminating dependency on CYFD in the long run?” Secretary Vigil’s response was, “Raising a healthy child to become a functioning, healthy adult . . . It starts in the womb, it starts at birth and it continues in every experience and environment that the child is in and it develops their wellbeing and their health, it takes everyone.” She said



she would like to see a system of care that is not just institutional, but that is built together with community. She also noted that it is important to take care of elders so that they can care for and contribute to the lives of children.

Budget

In discussing the CYFD juvenile justice budget, Collaborative members asked if any of that money could be diverted to fund community-based alternatives to youth incarceration. Secretary Vigil responded by saying, “I don’t see why not. Even if it’s a matter of reprioritizing. I think community involvement is key and we have to explore ways in which your work as funded through the Casey Foundation can be sustained in the State of New Mexico.” Secretary Vigil also noted that, “not everything has to come from the state budget, but certainly a contribution or some sort of sustainable plan going forward after next year would be very, very positive.” Further, she said, she wants to know specifically:

- What does the Collaborative need?
- What are the results?
- How are kids being impacted?
- Is the Collaborative decreasing detention?
- What are the collaborative’s ideas for sustainability?

She suggests the planning start now, planting the seed, so that the collaborative will be ready to say, “We are ready to go forward.” While funding goes through the legislature and executive branch, Secretary Vigil said, “I would be interested in knowing how I can use my position to incorporate something that can be filtered out to your organization.” However, questions were raised about the grassroots and community-based ethics of taking money from governmental entities while still keeping impacted youth and families at the center, which also requires support from community organizations, families, and other resources. Eric Pacheco said,

“Do we do that or do we just sit here protesting? I mean, that’s a question for all of us. So, we just sit here protesting saying, ‘you’re doing wrong with our money, you’re hurting the youth with our money.’ And yet we can grab the money to try to build something else that creates healing, that creates change. Or do *we* do it? - and *we* can do it without their money. That’s a true statement, guaranteed. Because it’s going to take our time. But at the same time, it’s like you jumping in the same system that perpetuates harm. So, it’s difficult, we got some work.”

The Collaborative will be faced with larger questions about how to do business, including the positive and negative consequences of accepting funding, and who may be trusted as allies as the group moves forward.

Further Questions and observations:

Annie: **What is the Secretary’s definition of incarceration?** We need her to be very specific because the definition of “incarceration” may be very narrow in her view. “Sometimes incarceration is seen as just detention and not necessarily commitment ((Residential Treatment Centers) RTCs, etc.).” In her answer, is she including these other forms of confinement? We should be very clear about what we mean by “incarceration”.

From Christopher (he or they) Tiwa Lands/T4B: “One thing is how can CYFD be part of healing from the trauma it has inflicted on youth, families and communities especially



communities and people of color. Another thing that feels very real for me is the tension that I hear and see families and young people who are impacted by CYFD which is both supposed to provide resources and support for youth and families but also criminalize, incarcerate, police and separate them (especially the disparate racial impact of children, families and CYFD staff).

How can one agency both provide resources and lock youth up?

- “How do we follow up with an agency that is both supposed to serve and provide resources for youth and families, and is also the agency that incarcerates, separates, penalizes, criminalizes families?”
- What’s the plan for diversion or restorative justice programming instead of juvenile justice? Appreciating communities and states that have focused on closing juvenile detention centers and shifting staff to diversion and restorative justice.

Wyatt Day (Transgender Resource Center): “I also want to sit in the discomfort that some of our youth shared, because I trust the intuition of young people and adolescents and children because their guts have real lived experiences and sometimes, they haven’t been programed and trained to push that down, they haven’t been told to suppress their intuition. And we just really want to listen to that right now in my mind, is listen to their guts and listen to what they are saying and maybe just sit with them and hold space for that.”

From Eva Buchwald she/her : Would the Secretary be willing to tour the youth prisons? Learn about conditions of confinement? Could you imagine what else could be done with those funds instead of running facilities?

Albino: How do we empower youth justice groups/coalition that already exist within the collaborative – what does that look like? How do we do that? How do we bring forth a multigenerational narrative? Can we bring in some of the statements/documents that already exist?

MonTiel: It’s important to follow up about what our ideas and solutions are
How are other agencies like Department of Health (DOH), schools and other systems also impacting families

Barriers in place to prevent justice-impacted people to help youth and families

Many Collaborative members were interested in removing barriers for employment, education, contracting, etc. for people with legal histories. **CYFD regulation 8.14.14.9 bars persons with felony records from employment and entry into juvenile facilities.** In addition, limitations that CYFD puts on agencies that are licensed and not juvenile justice facilities (shelters, etc.) create barriers for services and support for youth. Secretary Vigil responded by saying, “Yes, I would be very interested in reducing barriers.” In discussing how to do that, she said that she wants to turn to people with direct experiences to help guide and advise.

Inspired by this conversation as it related to her personal experience, Documentation Team Youth Intern, Mikayla Trujillo shared the story of her journey to receive her Community Health Worker certification. After over a year of advocacy and service to the CHW community she was granted her state CHW certification! She fought the system, which attempted to deny her the opportunity to serve her community in this way, and won. “Policy change needs to



happen so that the application and certification process is equitable for all with lived experience and criminal backgrounds,” she said.



Photo by Lonnie J. Anderson

[View more of Mikayla’s story here](#)



November 17th (5th Sun- Sacred Strategy of Engagement)

(OZOMAHTLI-Monkey)

During the November meeting, the Collaborative journeyed back to the foundation of the group's purpose. Garcia originally created the mission statement with help from Annie Salsich in 2020, before the group was formed, as a way of providing context for the work he envisioned. However, after building the Collaborative's collective identity over a year of work together, the mission statement was brought to the table with requests for revisions. Each part of the mission was isolated so that Collaborative members could focus on the details of each component of the mission. Collaborative members broke into groups to discuss each section and to make suggestions for edits and revisions. The phrase, "keep youth safe at home" was questioned by several collaborative members who noted that "home" is not always a safe space for youth. There were also several other suggestions around youth self-determination and agency that encouraged a step away from language that assumes youth do not have agency in creating healthy futures for themselves. After discussing and deconstructing the language in the mission statement, a revised version was presented to the Collaborative. Main discussion points and the final version are below.

Our aim is to: honor and strengthen our community self-determination; reduce (and eventually eliminate) dependence on the juvenile justice system; and keep youth safe at home and supported by the capable hands of their own communities

PART 1:

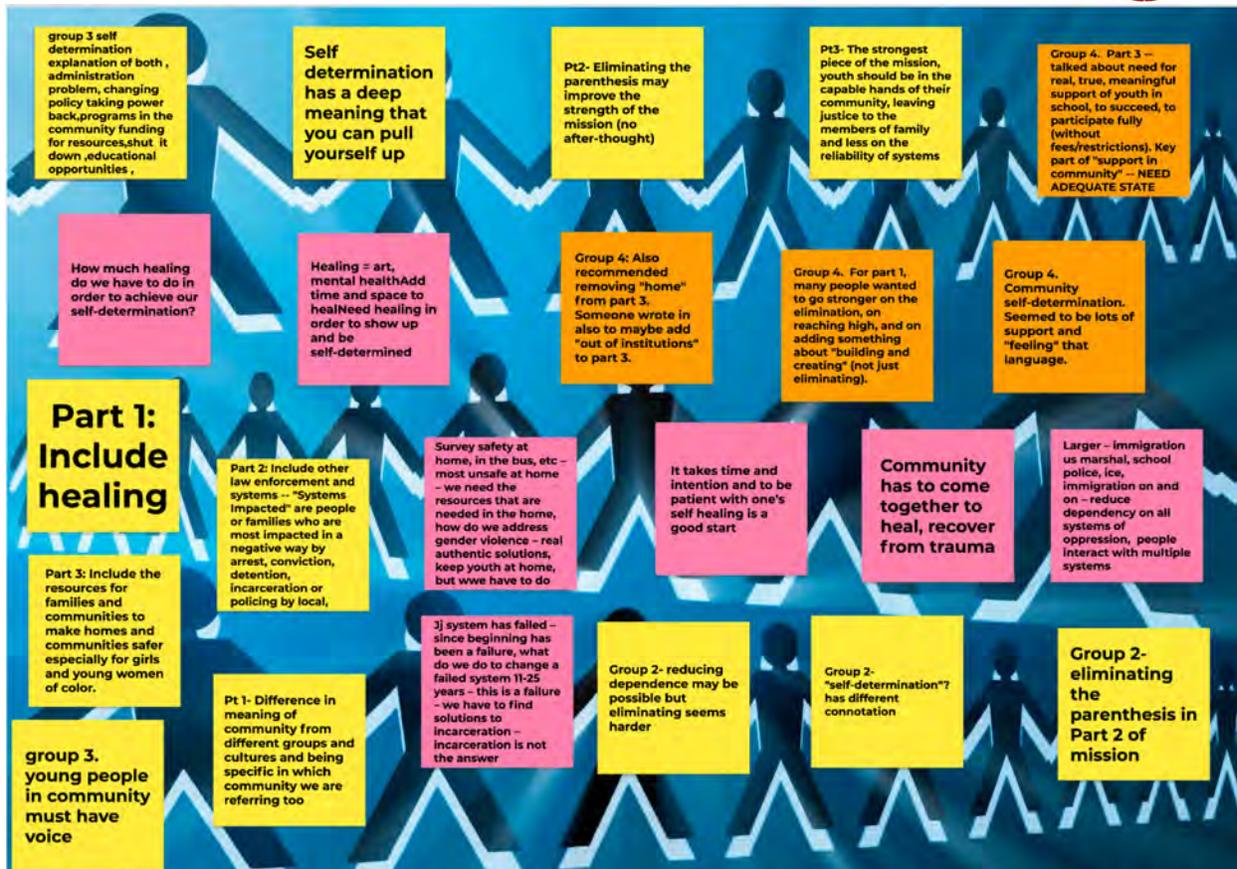
honor and strengthen our community self-determination;

PART 2:

reduce (and eventually eliminate) dependence on the juvenile justice system

PART 3:

and keep youth safe at home and supported by the capable hands of their own communities



MISSION STATEMENT

ORIGINAL VERSION: To honor and strengthen community self-determination; reduce (and eventually eliminate) dependence on the juvenile justice system; and keep youth safe at home and supported by the capable hands of their own communities.

REVISED VERSION: To honor community strength and wisdom; reduce and eventually eliminate dependence on the juvenile justice system; imagine and build an alternative to the justice system that is grounded in local culture and where youth are kept out of institutional settings, safe and supported by the capable hands of their own communities.



December 15th (5th Sun- Sacred Strategy of Engagement)

(QUIAUHUITL- Jagged Edge Tongue/Tongue that Cuts/ Speak the Truth)

“We see everything that we do in cycles and almost ceremonially, this, to me, is a year-long ceremony and we’re culminating soon and beginning another cycle . . . this is a generation-long ceremony, this is 10-20 years of work that needs to happen, at minimum.” - *Albino Garcia*

In December, the Collaborative formed engagement circles around the central issues related to justice for youth. As the design team was working to define and organize the engagement circles we noticed that the grouping of the work to be done also fell in line with the cultural context that the Collaborative is built on. These multiple worlds of understanding, represented by Mexica symbology, can also be applied to these circles. So the documentation team transformed the *Quinto Sol* graphic to translate connections between these symbols and the work we will engage in together, with hope that this helps to visualize how our work is connected to each other and centered around movement for justice. Each engagement circle is tasked with selecting multi-generational co-leadership.

- Tecpatl, or the flint knife, the spark, the double-edged blade that cuts to the core may offer insight to the circle working on funding.
- Acatl, or reed, reflects concepts of family and how we carry, protect and feed each other and may provide insight to the space and place circle
- Tochtli, or the rabbit, represents multiplicity and how we relate to community and this can be applied to the community engagement circle
- Calli or house represents institutions and houses of learning and this may inform the work that the legislative change engagement circle will do
- And finally, in the center is Nahui Ollin, or movement, represented here by the Justice for Youth Collaborative

By the end of the first year, the Collaborative had created a sense of community, discussed and defined what justice does *not* look like and began to move toward “doing justice” as a collaborative of communities, families, and individuals. During the final meeting of the year, in December of 2021, engagement circles were formed around: funding, space & place, community engagement and policy & legislative change, represented by the cultural symbols that guided the movement of the Collaborative over the first year. Collaborative members self-



selected the circles they would join and work was done to define the work ahead and the possible solutions that exist.





Funding:



Space/place:





Community Engagement:



Policy and Legislative change:





CONCLUSIONS

We begin this section, led by youth voice and vision. First, with a poem that shows growth, encouraged by movement.

One's Choice

by Emani Brooks, Keshet Dance and Center for the Arts, "Movement for Mercy"

*I love you
I try to tell myself not to but I do
Training my heart to be submissive to my mind
Constant memories of your inconsistency come flooding in
No matter what I do, my heart will not allow me to hate you
The restraint my body has over this selfish love
Intertwined between not caring, and caring too much
Creating prevention from this devil's prison
You will NOT defeat me
No more broken promises
And no more broken dreams
I've been creating fantasies of you
Imagining the opposite of our realities in my dreams
Happy
Healing
Forgiving of yourself and the choices you have made
Knowing there is no going back, only forward
I pray you remember to love me once you learn to love you
At war with your addiction
I believed I was on your side until I realized I was beneath you
Relation changing from ally to enemy
Becoming both of our nightmares
Past and present
To look at you and not see you
To hear you and not know you
Vacant...
In need of one's life purpose
A blackened canvas needing to be repainted, repurposed
But it is more than a "makeover" needing to be done
More than what rehab services can provide
Soul searching for a spiritual cleansing
To let it all go
The hurt...
The guilt...
And even the unknown...
Your misery reigns over you
Self inflicting the misery brought onto you
Only one decision is to be made
To be rid of one's insanity
And that
Is to choose growth*



YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

Chris Wall's Documentation Summary:

Before I write about the Albuquerque Justice for Youth Community Collaborative, I must give my background so the reader can have an idea where I am coming from. My roots is your average Native kid from the Reservation. I did not grow up in Albuquerque. That does not mean, I can't share empathy. I am a fairly new graduate with a major in Psychology.

In the first planning meeting, I was nervously sitting at the Zoom meeting. This meeting was about planning for this big monthly meeting. To my surprise, I saw many people making use of the meeting. I was thinking this was refreshing compared to what I am used to. The first time I saw Albino speak, he was very grounded and knew what he wanted to accomplish. You can see the respect and the support for him from the others. Albino assembled a large group of people passionate for helping the youth. Albino introduced the concept called Quinto Sol or 5th Sun. Each month is a different focus, according to the season. The first month is condor and switching to eagle. I was feeling excited about being a part of this project.

After the one more planning meeting, there was a meeting that represents the condor. In this meeting the group was showing the youth background of where the juvenile justice system came from. This included information about how many youths are in the juvenile justice system in New Mexico and how this system mostly affects people of color. When youth saw the estimate of the cost of the system, this peaked some of the youth interests. One youth said, "this put things into perspective." Another youth explained "Wouldn't it be more cost-effective to start treatment for both physical and mental wellbeing for youth?" You can see the youth facial expressions full of thought. After the powerpoint highlighting events in history that oppressed people of color, such as the Hiawatha Insane center and Chung Mei School, we did a breakout session. I was curious what the youth had to say. In this session one youth was saying "The probation system is out for people of color and can easily lead youth to the juvenile justice system." Another Youth was talking about how it's important to have a system where we come together with those being the system. Not those who only been outside the system. One person said "we need an area and place to speak without judgment or problems". This person said "we need stuff like food and money and let youth actually do stuff in these types of programs." This was the first but very powerful meeting with youth. I think everybody was very impacted by this meeting and got people thinking.

After some time passed by and meetings came and gone, one thing Albino was talking about is whether a kid deserved to be in jail even in extreme cases like murder. I have not really thought about that. My first thought was no but when Albino said even in extreme cases that made me pause for a moment. I had to second guess myself. Do I really believe all children do not deserve to be locked up. I could not stop thinking about this. I asked this same question to my former colleague. They said the same too. Then I added the extreme case's part. My colleague also paused for a moment. They said, "This is a good philosophy question, I don't really know." I responded "I don't see it as a philosophy question, this is people's reality. But I don't know either." Being part of this project got self-reflecting. I wonder if others that are in the collaboration feel the same way too, or is it an easy choice for them. I know this is true though that it is making people think. I feel that a big part of the goals of this project is getting people to think. The next major monthly meetings are going to keep the youth thinking and tools to use for change.

In the 9th month of the year, the Collaborative had a special speaker name James Bell. I was very fortunate watching this person speak about system change. He was able to shut down a children's prison. His ideas gave hope to me and possibilities for the future. Bell was showing areas where change



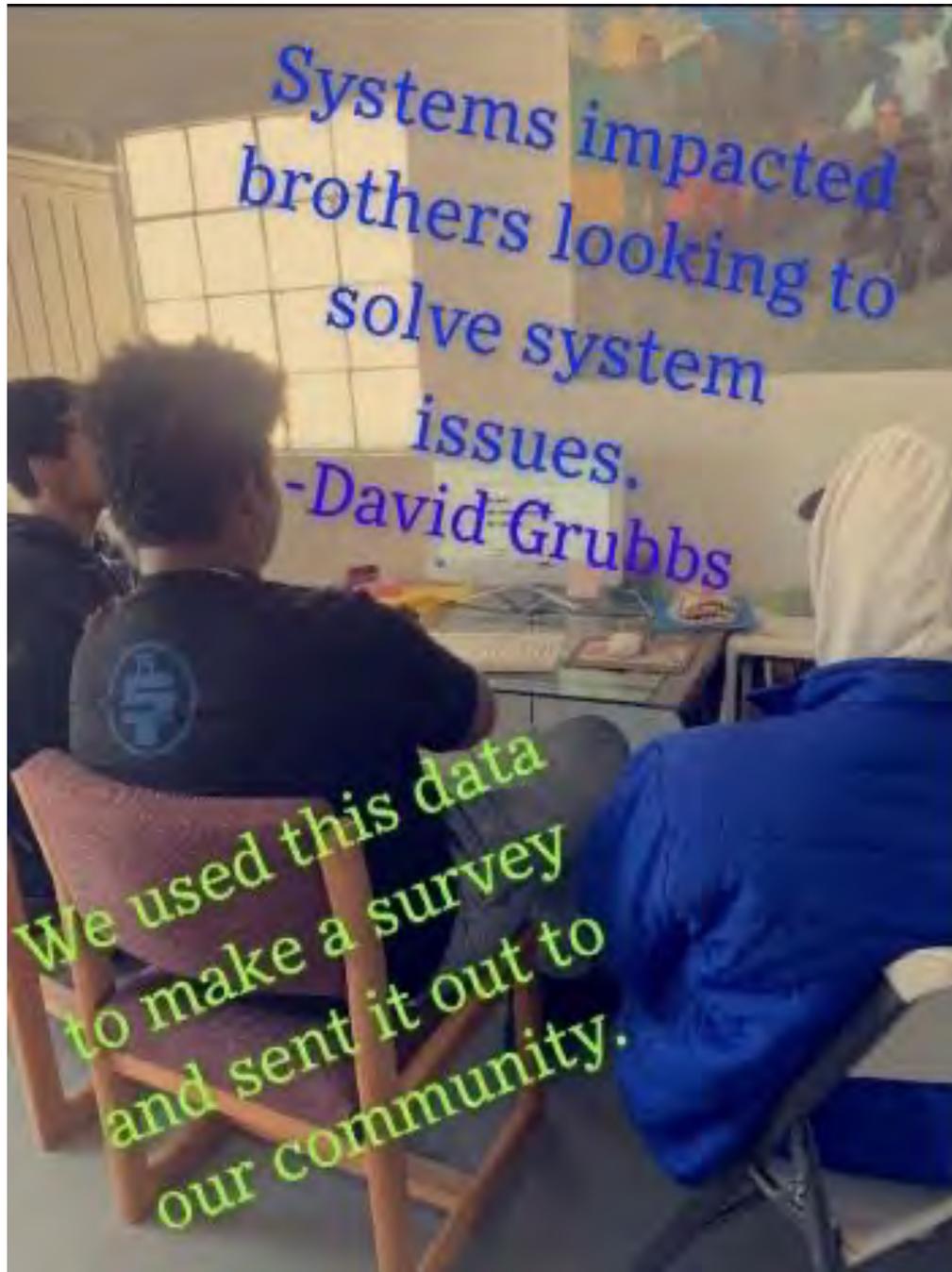
is needed such as judges, probation, lawyers and law enforcement. Bell let us know that we cannot focus just on one problematic area but the whole system in itself. One concept I really enjoyed is the community-based solutions. The best people that can help the community is the community. They know what the problems are that they are dealing with. Working to change problems with people in the community gives a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment. This is better than a person who does not understand the area and trying to build a one-size-fits-all solution. After Mr. Bell finished his presentation. We split us up into Zoom groups. One person explained his experience with a community-centered approach about city planning. He brought up the point that talking together can bring out a community's needs. He explained everybody was talking about how they wanted a Taco Bell in their area. After a deep and long conversation with the community, they came to a conclusion. The real problem was not having a Taco Bell, but it was lack of access to healthy food. This is related to what Bell was saying. When they focused on community input about their area, they started to understand the real problem that they faced.

On October 20, 2021, the Collaborative had a very special guest, Barbara Vigil, who was the formal Supreme Justice Judge for New Mexico and the new CYFD (Children Youth and Family Department) secretary for New Mexico. CYFD houses many programs for youth and youth justice such as early childhood service, protective services and juvenile justice. The Collaborative treated Vigil with respect and did not hold back on tough questions for youth justice. Vigil said she goes by three mantras: transparency, collaboration and accountability. One of the Collaborative members explained CYFD has one of largest ever budgets. The member asked how much and where the money was going. Vigil responded with an amount for the budget, but then was quickly corrected by another member. This member explained this did not show the true amount for the budget and did not take account of funds from areas from juvenile justice. Vigil said she would give a more accurate budget amount. The Collaborative member who asked the question about the money told Vigil, "This is part being transparent." The crucial part of meeting for me was seeing that the Collaborative youth had the opportunity to speak to a person in power. This shows the strength of this youth justice collaborative, allowing youth the power of possible change in their community by opening doors to communication on issues of concern with higher ups. One youth asked if Vigil is going to continue to work with the community. Vigil replied that she was going to and wanted to bring more people over to listen to the community. A different youth wanted to know if the department is too large. Vigil replied I have to learn how the system works before she can give an accurate response back. She was willing to answer that question. The youth showed skill and their passion for community and justice for youth in this meeting.

My experience with this project has been wonderful from the first meeting I joined last year. Everybody that was part of the collaboration showed their passion for Justice for Youth. Members also showed how much they care about community voice. It was great that the collaboration provided resources for the youth members to help them to continue with the project. This group has some of the most honest and hardworking people I have worked with. The only one area I know they should work on is more organized meeting dates. What I mean by this is that we would get last minute meetings. This makes it hard for people to be able to join meetings. Scheduling issues I feel was largely because of COVID. If we got to meet normally, it might be easier to plan meetings. Having others work remotely and find time for all of us to meet must have been challenging for the Collaborative. Everyone had to learn a whole new virtual system called Zoom. Despite all of these setbacks, the Collaborative was able to overcome these obstacles. Giving the youth tools and knowledge about bringing change in the community was incredible for their first year of doing anything like this. This project made a strong



foundation for the future. I feel like this is the seed of creating something better for future youth. I want to see how next year is going to be for this Collaborative. All I can say is good luck and thanks for letting me be a part of history for New Mexico. **Sincerely, Chris.**



Digital Image by Baruch Campos and David Grubbs



SOLUTIONS, CHALLENGES & NEW CYCLES

PROGRESS: SHIFTING THE JUVENILE JUSTICE NARRATIVE

Narrative shift is an intentional process of shifting power that offers insight into equity-based storytelling as a means of achieving systemic change (deMaria & Rael, 2018). Real change takes time and space. The collaborative took the first steps by opening space for stories that challenge myths of justice put forth by systems agents, by shifting the location of the narrator to focus on those who are most-impacted by the prison industrial complex. Solorzano & Yosso (2002) argue that counter-storytelling is, “a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told” (p. 26). Further, “Counter-storytelling also aims to expose race-neutral discourse to reveal how White privilege operates within an ideological framework to reinforce and support unequal societal relations between Whites and People of Color” (Meriweather Hunn, 2006, p. 244).

The Collaborative disrupted the master narrative of justice in New Mexico by amplifying counter-stories that stand in opposition to narratives of dominance.

“Dominant narratives carry multiple layers of assumptions that serve as filters in discussions of racism, sexism, classism, and so on” (p. 244). It is argued that, “participation of people in group action and dialogue efforts directed at community targets enhances control and beliefs in ability to change people’s own lives” (Wallerstein, p. 383, 1988). Listening is a key component in this model, as an agent of empowerment. “Powerlessness is linked to disease, and conversely, empowerment linked to health” (p. 383, 1988). Therefore, deep listening, dialogue and empowerment are linked to health and holistic opportunities to engage in narrative processes is beneficial to meaningful change. The Collaborative’s aim to change the deeply-embedded juvenile justice narrative will take time, possibly generations, but each and every member of the Collaborative makes a small shift with every story told, listened to, and believed.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation granted funding to achieve stated outcomes related to narrative change. In the first year, the Collaborative already achieved these outcomes.

- 1) **Bring together community stakeholders to strengthen their power-base and influence in order to reinvest and expand the juvenile justice narrative from a community perspective.**
 - More than 50 Design Team planning/strategy meetings to carry out 12 monthly meetings with an average of 45 participants representing 24 partner organizations who also partnered with system-impacted youth and family members.
 - Each meeting evolved the understanding of the juvenile justice narrative from a community perspective.

- 2) **Reduce competition for resources by giving community stakeholders an incentive to participate in the design and reclamation of the juvenile justice narrative.**
 - Community partners received \$10,000 which they could use to support their own organizational capacity, both more broadly and specifically in increasing their



capacity for working with justice-impacted youth and families. Distributing the funding up front and equally to all partner organizations with minimal requirements beyond monthly attendance at meetings provided all stakeholders with a piece of the funding so that it reduced competition.

- Not placing elaborate accounting requirements on the distributed funding increased community partner trust, innate investment in the process, and more flexibility for organizations to self-determine use of the funding as needed in order to be partners at the table.
- Evidence was seen in the transparency of funding opportunities shared among Collaborative organizations. Opportunities for collaboration were offered and situations that may have previously been done behind closed doors were openly discussed and strategized among Collaborative members.
- The collaborative functions on multiple levels, weaving a strong support net, that has caught youth collaborative members before they fall. We are seeing multiple referrals to member organizations, from others that had been in competition with each other, and youth benefiting from services that they would not have had access to had it not been for the network that the collaborative provides.

3) Initiate a shift away from systems ownership towards community ownership in the Juvenile Justice narrative.

- The Collaborative shifted power away from institutional master narratives by uplifting systems-impacted narrators as experts.
- Storytelling was used as a strategy for building relationships and building a Collaborative narrative that includes a vision for a world without prisons.
- Complicated histories of colonizations and migrations were explored as a way of building a more complex narrative of the history and future of justice for youth.
- The Collaborative gave systems-impacted youth and family members a safe space for building their personal narratives. In doing this collaboratively, we realize we are not alone in our experiences.



Challenges and Recommendations

Overall, in the first year of the Collaborative, there were many indicators of success and forward movement. Areas of growth were also identified by Collaborative members. These are listed in the table below with some recommendations for next steps to address these challenges in the next year.

Challenge	Recommendation
<p>Process Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● lack of facilitation to engage participants ● more organization and planning ● unclear communication ● no meeting records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Going forward, the Collaborative would benefit from planning three months out rather than month by month. ● A community-developed strategic plan with clear goals and steps would help to make the organization and planning needs more predictable ● Identify an individual or organization (or a rotation of responsibility) to take the lead in recording meetings and disseminating records. ● Train Collaborative members how to use a common folder so that previous meeting records can be accessed by all members.
<p>Relationship Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● limited time and space to collaborate and build relationships with others ● historical mistrust between individuals and institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Now that a common history and language has been built, dedicate more of the monthly meeting times to small group interactions with each having a clear goal to achieve while together. ● Ask if each organization would take turns hosting a Collaborative gathering that could showcase that organization's expertise while also being a way to connect. Many Collaborative members still do not know who is in the Collaborative. Doing a "Travel around Albuquerque" to take the time to meet each organization and individual represented and engage in a thoughtful activity in support of that organization's work might support relationship-building and issues with limited resources. ● Invite a speaker who can speak on trauma triggers and mistrust in multi-cultural workgroups and self-care for alleviating triggers, opening to trust while also staying protected



<p>Resource Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● work/life balance and attending meetings ● scheduling conflicts with limited resource of time ● Missing voices at the table 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tie in work accomplished through Collaborative to other work obligations or funding goals. ● For youth and family members, consider ways that participation can lead to informal acknowledgements or awards, to more formal certificate achievement towards employment or career enhancement ● Consider inviting: more system-impacted youth and families, tribes and Pueblos, current detained and incarcerated individuals (including refugee youth), unhoused youth, elders 75+, LGBTQ+, people who have an increasing role on checking police brutality, refugee (African/Middle Eastern) communities, Tonya Covington and Peacemakers, Cesar Gonzalez (ADOBE), Mattee Jim and queer/trans Native communities, CEC at UNM, policy makers and legislators, New Mexico Voices for Children, Party for Socialism and Liberation, organizations working with Native American Children, Sanitary Tortilla Factory, NM Alumni in Recovery
<p>Youth Support and Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● some youth left for lack of support or engagement ● not enough time or advance notice to support prepping authentic youth involvement ● not many models of intergenerational leadership with community members of all ages collaborative leading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gain a critical mass of youth ● Provide more historical context and foundational knowledge for youth at a developmentally appropriate level ● Decrease the amount of time expected to engage in meetings OR increase youth-friendly facilitation with shorter work periods, more developmentally appropriate information sharing, and more active engagement through arts, activities and games to keep the energy and increase personal connections ● Provide a separate required time just for youth and their mentors to support preparing youth for the next discussion ● Continue to monitor and develop innovative approaches to intergenerational work and document what is effective and what is not



PROGRESS ON GOALS

In order to document the impact of forming the Collaborative on the stated goals, all collaborative members completed a survey in April and again at the end of December, with some questions that could be compared to responses earlier in the year and some retrospective questions on the December 2021 end-of-year Justice for Youth Community Collaborative survey.

- **GOAL 1: Build authentic community and transparency.**
 - System-impacted youth who are a part of the collaborative reported an increased sense of support from other system-impacted youth and family members (retrospectively from 57% to 86%), and an increased sense of support from organizations (retrospectively from 43% to 100%).
 - Collaborative members, in general, reported personal change through their participation in the past year, including: increased awareness and education on juvenile justice issues, personal transformation and healing, strengthened relationships and connections, and increased hopefulness.

“I personally have been able to see far past my own lived experience to help youth who are currently experiencing trauma from the youth justice systems.”

“I feel more connected to the people in the collaborative. It is affirming hearing from the systems-impacted people that the collaborative is making a difference.”

“In a time in which hope and dreaming are in low supply, being a part of this collaborative has given me hope and sense that together real meaningful change can come. That's a gift right now.”

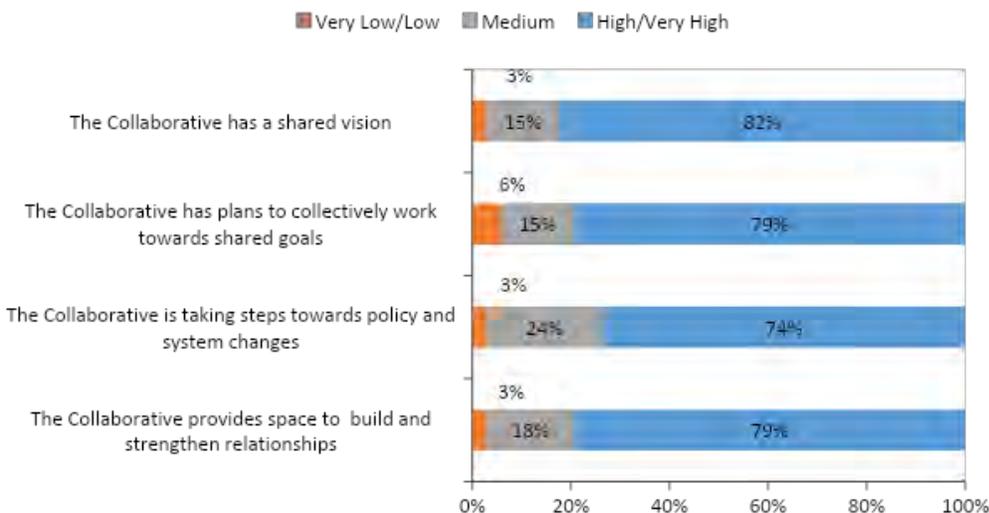
- **GOAL 2: Increase capacity, authentic belonging and ownership.**
 - The collaborative effectively increased organizational familiarity with juvenile justice issues (retrospective increase from 51% to 63%), active engagement in juvenile justice issues (retrospective increase from 44% to 56%), and expanded professional networks with other organizations (retrospective increase from 71% to 92%).
- **GOAL 3: Amplify community voice.**
 - Being a part of the Justice for Youth Collaborative increased members' strength of trust that communities have the capacity to provide positive alternatives to youth incarceration from 69% in April to 82% in December.



- 79% of Collaborative members believe that the Justice for Youth Collaborative will be highly impactful in changing the current justice system.
- In April, Collaborative members provided input on the accomplishments they would want to achieve in the first year of their collaboration. They identified four goals:
 - 1) create a shared vision
 - 2) collectively work towards shared goals
 - 3) take steps towards policy and systems change
 - 4) provide a space to build and strengthen relationships.

At the end of the year, Collaborative members rated how much progress they felt they had achieved toward these goals over the last year. The vast majority reported satisfaction with progress on these goals (see figure below).

Most Collaborative members (over 90%) believe the Collaborative has a shared vision, has plans to work together towards goals, taking steps to make system changes, and provides a space to build relationships



- Collaborative members identified several specific ways they have begun to impact change: 1) reimagining and finding alternative ideas for how youth justice can look, 2) community-based solutions to support a healing process, 3) following the lead of system-impacted individuals to inform actions, and 4) providing the space and time for connection and collaboration.

“Over the past year I feel we have started treading the waters of community justice by participating in a space of healing and restoring the trust between organizations that have been distant for too long. This Collaborative is a game changer in the sense that we have now found a space to join forces. Now the real work begins.”

- The significant achievements towards justice for youth the Collaborative has made includes having made space for people to connect; engaged in conversation with policy makers; progress towards a shared vision and goals; advocated and provided a voice for youth and families; and increased awareness and understanding.



“Bringing individuals and organizations together in conversation, and shared work, getting to know one another better; being allies and offering support and resources. I see more awareness and collective concern and energy around creating change.”

“Creating a sacred space for those impacted by the justice system and working towards shared goals of healing our youth.”

“Build relationships amongst organizations who typically do not all work together on a common cause. Additionally, build community through cultural practices.”

“Talking to the senator, also taking certain steps towards building a force focused on the same goal made up of one powerful community organization from multiple organizations.”

“By talking with the legislator and having enough youth and families to support their mission statement.”

“Progress toward what our goal/vision is, and we’ve brainstormed ideas on how we could make them come true.”

“Vision and purpose set to find solutions. Acknowledgement of root causes of generational incarceration + trauma”



Photo by Lonnie J. Anderson

“It is our duty to fight for our freedom.

It is our duty to win.

We must love each other and support each other.

We have nothing to lose but our chains.”

— **Assata Shakur**



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